YOUNG KING COMICS

スピリットサークル 魂環

05

水上悟志

34TH CENTURY EARTH. HUMANKIND WAS ON THE BRINK OF EXTINCTION.
THE PAST LIFE I SAW WAS THE FUTURE.
...AND FORBADE TECHNOLOGY THAT WOULD HAVE ALLOWED HUMANS TO ADVANCE.
UM, MASTER?
BOTH GOVERNMENT AND TERRORISTS CLAIMED THE BEST INTERESTS OF HUMANITY'S FUTURE...
DON'T BOTHER ME, RUNE.
...
I HAVE TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENS NEXT.
ULTIMATELY, THE EARTH WAS DESTROYED WHEN THE BLACK HOLE WEAPON RAN OUT OF CONTROL.
I'M GOING TO WATCH THE REST HERE.
I CAN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT IT.

...AND THE CULMINATION OF ALL THAT HAD HAPPENED IN THE PAST AND WOULD HAPPEN IN THE FUTURE?
WAS THAT REALLY THE FINAL DES-TINATION...
...OF EVERY HUMAN LIVING ON EARTH...
CIRCLE 30
CONFESSION 1

...THEN FROM HERE ON...
...AND I DON'T KNOW THE MEANING OF HUMAN-KIND'S EX-ISTENCE...
SHOULD THAT BE THE CASE...

SURELY YOU KNOW SOME-THING!
...FOR-TUNA!
...EVEN IF MY NEXT PAST LIFE IS DURING A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT ERA AND PROVIDES ME WITH NO CLUES...

SNATCH
WHAT ?!
AAAAH!!

?!
JUMP

AAAAH!
AH...

WAAH!
RU...
HEY!
J
E
C
G
V
HUH?!
RUNE?!

YOU TRIED TO SEE YOUR NEXT PAST LIFE?
WHAT ARE YOU, STUPID?!
YOU SAW HOUTAROU'S THE MIDDLE OF LAST WEEK AND LAFALLE'S OVER THE WEEKEND...
...AND NOW IT'S MONDAY!
...I WAS SLEEPING.
YOU WERE IN SUCH A HURRY.
...WHAT WERE YOU DOING SUNDAY?
IN FACT, IF YOU SAW IT SATURDAY...
YOU'RE NOT GIVING YOURSELF ENOUGH TIME.
I'M NOT BEING CONSUMED BY THE PERSONALITIES OF MY PAST LIVES.
DON'T POKE ME.
I'M FINE.
I'M NOT SURPRISED RUNE INTERRUPTED YOUR ATTEMPT TO DIVE INTO YOUR PAST LIVES.
IT'S TOTALLY AFFECTING YOU.
POKE POKE

I'LL GO LOOK FOR RUNE NOW.
IF YOU PROMISE NOT TO SEE YOUR PAST LIVES FOR A WHILE...
...I'LL TELL HER TO COME BACK.

HMPH. I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT.
NOT THAT I CARE, THOUGH.
YOU DON'T?

THEN I'LL TAKE CARE OF RUNE.
GREAT IDEA!
JUST FOR A WHILE.
THE THREE OF US WILL HAVE FUN LIVING TOGETHER!

I...
...CAN'T PROMISE THAT.

I-I'M NOT EXCITED OR ANYTHING.
I JUST THINK RUNE IS BETTER OFF STAYING WITH US, YOU KNOW?
AHEM!

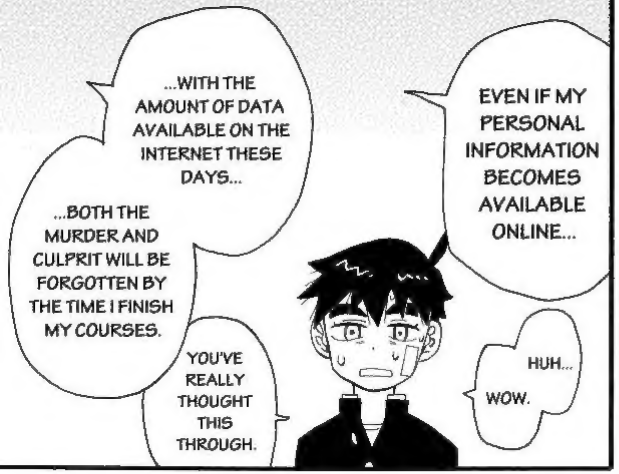
GASP
...

YOU DO SEEM MORE MATURE THAN USUAL, FUUTA-KUN.
YOUR PAST LIVES HAVE A STRONG INFLUENCE ON YOU.

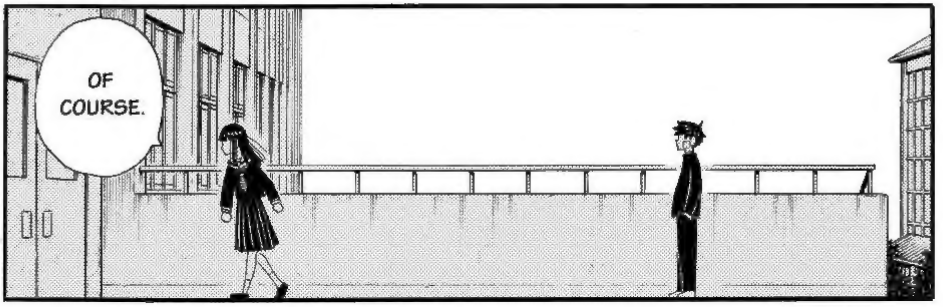
IT'S BETTER THAN HAVING HER MISSING.
THANKS, EAST.
I'LL GO LOOK FOR HER AFTER SCHOOL, TOO.

THAT'S JUST HOW THINGS ARE.
I'M A KID.
JUST AN ORDINARY SNOT-NOSED BRAT.
LAPIS, HUH?
LET'S GO, LAPIS.
OUR BREAK IS ENDING.
...IT'S EASIER TO HATE YOU.
...JUMBLE UP YOUR PERSON-ALITY...
WHEN YOUR PAST LIVES...
"OKEYA FUUTA-KUN" IS A GOOD KID.

...REGARDLESS OF WHETHER OR NOT YOU'RE BEING INFLUENCED...
EITHER WAY...
WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?
STEP
LIKE LAFALLE AND FORTUNA.
...YOU'LL BECOME A HARBINGER OF DISASTER.
...IF I LET YOU LIVE, SOMEDAY...
I HOPE YOU'LL REMAIN SOMEONE I CAN HATE FOREVER.
I'LL TURN MYSELF IN AND GO TO JUVENILE DETENTION.
WHAT WILL YOU DO AFTER YOU KILL ME?
MURDERERS DON'T LEAD VERY HAPPY LIVES IN THIS ERA.
LA... ISHIGAMI-SAN, YOU WANT TO KILL ME, RIGHT?
...


...WITH THE AMOUNT OF DATA AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET THESE DAYS...
...BOTH THE MURDER AND CULPRIT WILL BE FORGOTTEN BY THE TIME I FINISH MY COURSES.
YOU'VE REALLY THOUGHT THIS THROUGH.
EVEN IF MY PERSONAL INFORMATION BECOMES AVAILABLE ONLINE...
HUH...
WOW.

...I'LL TAKE CORRESPOND-ENCE COURSES TO FINISH HIGH SCHOOL AND THEN GO TO COLLEGE.
ONCE I GET OUT...


OF COURSE.

FUUTA, LET'S GO TO OUR CLUB.
I'D BETTER GO LOOK FOR RUNE.
OKAY.
キーン
DING DONG
コーン…
?
CARO--
DAD.
MAYBE HE'S STILL LOOKING FOR ANOTHER STASH..
FUUTA'S BEEN ACTING WEIRD LATELY.
I WONDER WHAT'S UP?
…
SORRY. I'M BUSY TODAY.
STEP
AGAIN?
WHAT'S GOING ON WITH YOU THESE DAYS?

100
JEEZ, RUNE...
WHERE DID SHE GO?

...HAVE ANYWHERE ELSE TO GO.
SHE DOESN'T...

LET ME STAY WITH YOU.

WHAT?
YOU'RE RIGHT. IT'S FUUTA.
HEY, IT'S FUUTA.
YO!

DAIKI...
TETSU, UMI...

HAVE YOU NOT BEEN HOME YET?
WHY ARE YOU IN YOUR UNIFORM?

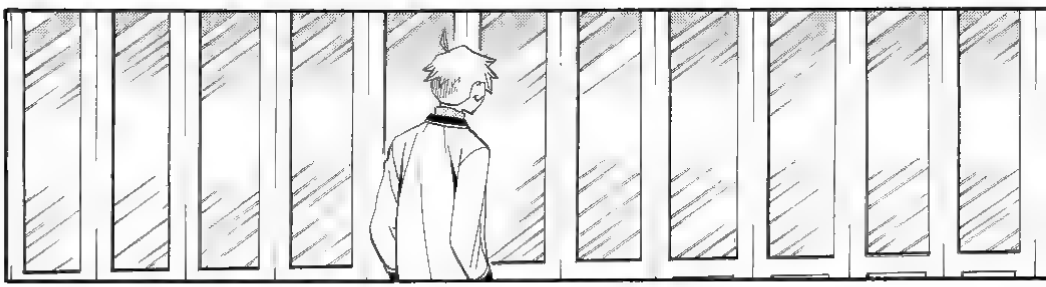
NONO LEFT A LITTLE EARLY, SO WE MISSED HER.

ALL THREE OF US.
WE GOT OUT OF OUR CLUBS AT THE SAME TIME.

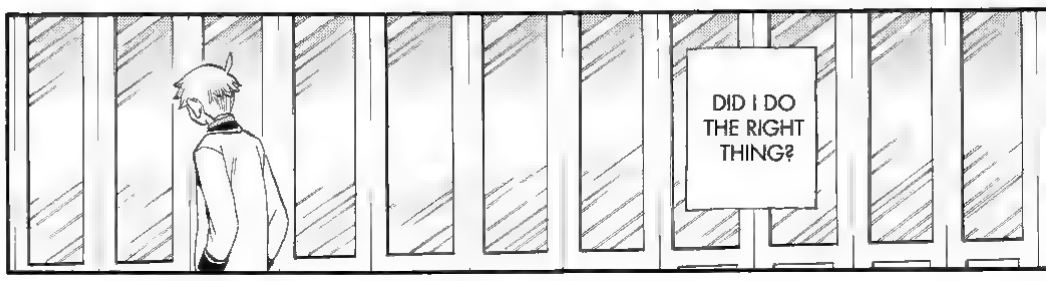
じっ
STARE
SHE LEFT RIGHT AFTER SCHOOL, SO I THOUGHT SHE WAS WITH YOU.
FUUTA, YOU'RE NOT WITH KOUKO?
IT'S NOTH-ING.
NO...
こっ
はっ
GASP
WHY ARE YOU STARING AT ME?
WH-WHAT?
また
AGAIN.
HUH?
WHAT?
IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT YOUR LOVE LIFE, YOU CAN TALK TO ME. ARE YOU INTO NONO OR KOUKO?
I'LL BEAT THE CRAP OUT OF HIM.
IF SOMEONE'S BULLYING YOU, LET ME KNOW.
FUUTA, IF YOU START NOW, YOU'LL STILL MAKE IT IN TIME FOR HIGH SCHOOL EXAMS.
I'LL HELP YOU.

GO HOME BEFORE IT GETS TOO LATE.
WHO ARE YOU, HIS MOM?
WHO ARE YOU CALLING AN OLD WOMAN?
I DIDN'T SAY THAT!

FUUTA, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
I-I'M OKAY.
IT'S NOTHING LIKE THAT.
THANKS! SEE YOU TOMORROW.

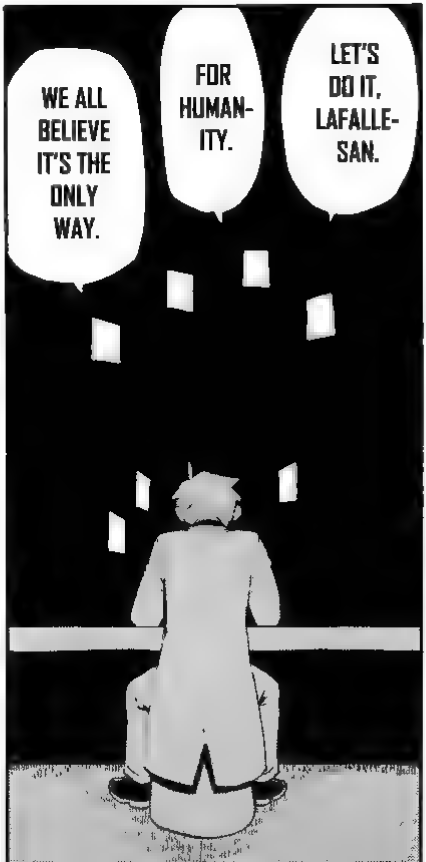


DID I...
TALIO.
UNCLE AIZEN.
RIFFLE.


DID I DO THE RIGHT THING?

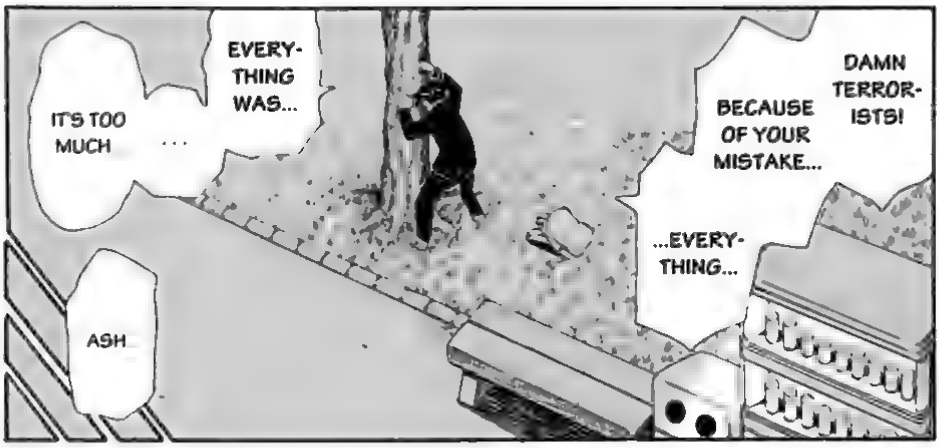
ISN'T THAT RIGHT ?!
I WAS RIGHT!
I DID THE RIGHT THING!
ABIB-SAN, KAITZ-SAN, STAUB-SAN, WORF-SAN!

WE DID IT...
...FOR HU-MAN-ITY!

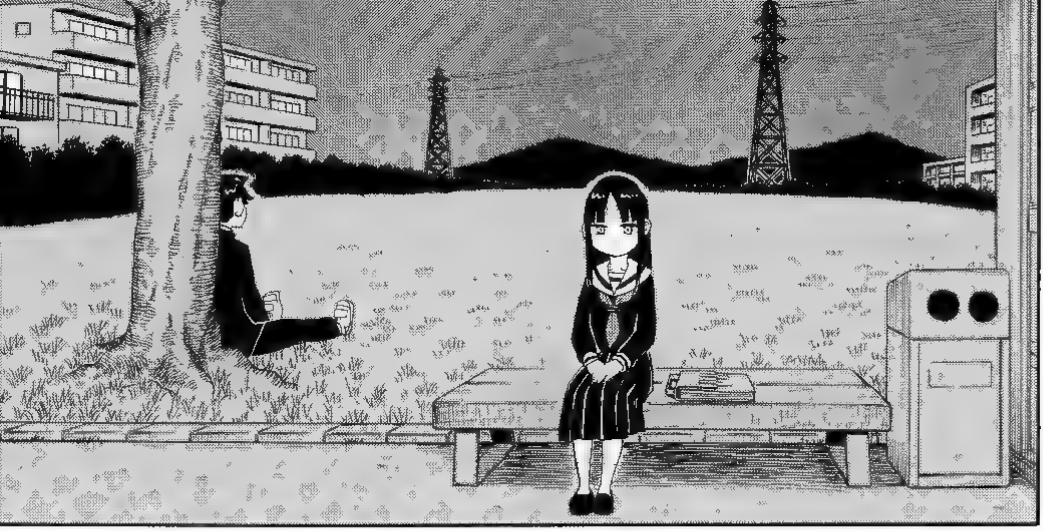

WE ALL BELIEVE IT'S THE ONLY WAY.
FOR HUMAN-ITY.
LET'S DO IT, LAFALLE-SAN.

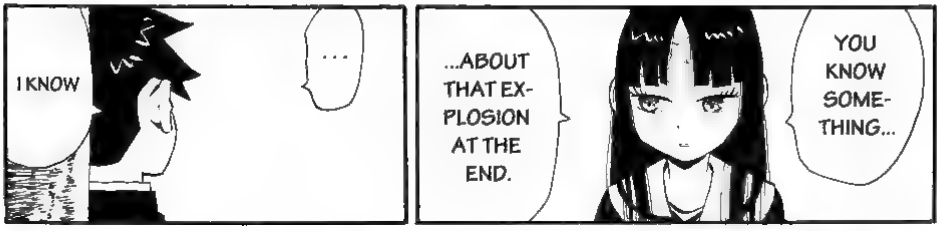
BUT... WHAT WAS THAT?!
THAT WASN'T ...

...HU-
MAN-
KIND
ENDS
?!
BONK
IS THAT
HOW...


IT'S TOO
MUCH
...
EVERY-
THING
WAS...
DAMN
TERROR-
ISTS!
BECAUSE
OF YOUR
MISTAKE...
...EVERY-
THING...
ASH

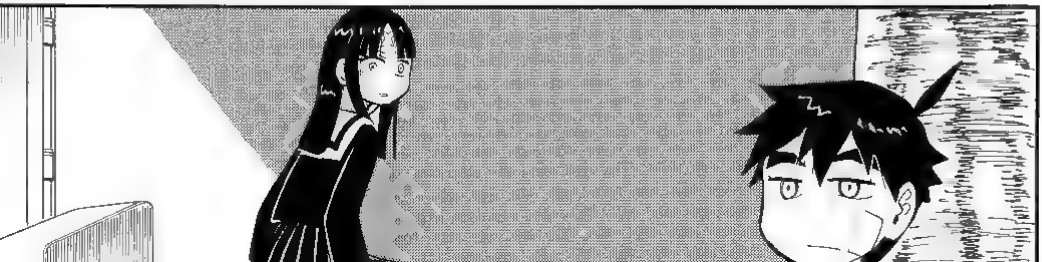
...
WHAT
ARE YOU
SCREAM
ING
ABOUT?
I THOUGHT
YOU WERE
LOOKING
FOR RUNE



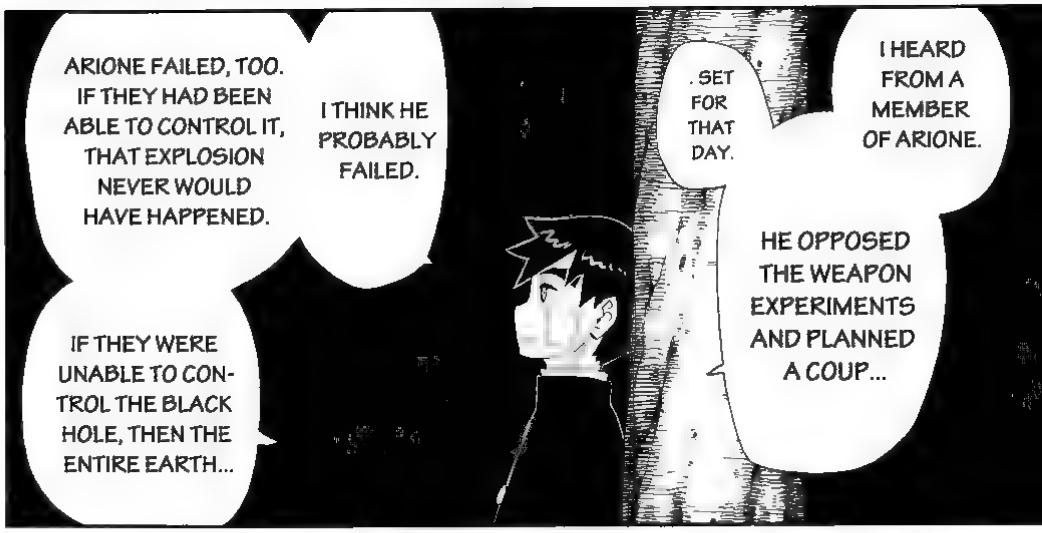

I KNOW
...
...ABOUT THAT EXPLOSION AT THE END.
YOU KNOW SOMETHING...

A BLACK HOLE WEAPON THAT ARIONE INVENTED RAN OUT OF ONTROL.
...
TELL ME.

NO, OF THE EARTH.
...OF HUMANKIND.
IT WAS THE END



...
THAT CAN'T BE...


I HEARD FROM A MEMBER OF ARIONE.
. SET FOR THAT DAY.
HE OPPOSED THE WEAPON EXPERIMENTS AND PLANNED A COUP...
I THINK HE PROBABLY FAILED.
ARIONE FAILED, TOO. IF THEY HAD BEEN ABLE TO CONTROL IT, THAT EXPLOSION NEVER WOULD HAVE HAPPENED.
IF THEY WERE UNABLE TO CONTROL THE BLACK HOLE, THEN THE ENTIRE EARTH...

.. CAN'T KEEP UP
MY BRAIN...
WAIT..
WAIT.

WHAT ?!
TALKING ABOUT IT MADE ME FEEL A LITTLE BETTER.
SORRY
...

I DON'T GET IT!
WHAT ?!
WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO WITH THAT INFO-RMATION?
SCRUB SCRUB
わし わし
I... YOU CAN'T...
YOU JERK...
SORRY.
"SORRY" . .
...WON'T CUT IT!
SO WHAT WAS THE POINT?
WHAT WAS THAT FIGHT ABOUT?!
I WORKED...
I WORKED SO HARD...

CALM DOWN.
H-HEY.
SAVED THEM?
FIGHT?
...?
IT CAN'T END LIKE THAT!
I... I SAVED THEM...
ジ
SHUT UP!
POW
キ
リ

I FEEL RE-FRESHED.
HA...
WHAT IS THIS? THAT'S AMAZING, ISHIGAMI-SAN.

...BUT DON'T YOU THINK IT'S TOO SOON TO GIVE IN TO DESPAIR?
SORRY, ISHIGAMI-SAN. I PESSIMISTICALLY LAMENTED ABOUT THE "ENTIRE EARTH," TOO...

WE HAVE A WAY TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS NEXT.
IT'S LAFALLE'S NEXT LIFE. EVEN IF IT'S IN ANOTHER ERA, WE MAY BE ABLE TO FIND SOME CLUES THERE.
GRIND
ぐ
ぎ
ぎ
WE STILL DON'T KNOW IF THAT WAS REALLY THE END OF THE WORLD.

DO YOU KNOW THE SUBJECT OF CAROL'S RESEARCH?

IT WAS TIME MACHINES.

BESIDES, THERE'S NO GUARANTEE THAT'S WHERE OUR FUTURE LEADS.

SHE HAD ALREADY CREATED PROBES.

..TIME MA-CHINES?

CAROL WAS..

..RE-SEARCH-ING..

THE RESULT CHANGED EVERY TIME. IN OTHER WORDS...

...LIGHT-NING WOULD STRIKE DIFFER-ENTLY.

3rd

2nd

1st

57th

47th

ACCORDING TO THOSE, NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES SHE WATCHED THE SAME EVENT AT THE SAME TIME...

HIS-TORY...

...BRANCHES.

END-LESS POSSI-BILITIES EXIST.

THAT MEANS...

PARALLEL UNIVERSES EXIST?

OUR DAUGHTER TAUGHT US...
...THAT THE FUTURE AND PAST AREN'T DECIDED.
IT'S ALL RIGHT. WE DON'T HAVE TO GIVE UP HOPE YET.
...
THANKS, ISHIGAMI-SAN.
THAT PUNCH CLEARED MY HEAD.
IT LOOKS LIKE I HAD BEEN CONSUMED BY LAFALLE.
MAYBE THERE WAS SOME OF HOUTAROU'S INFLUENCE, TOO

THANKS.
BECAUSE YOU PUNCHED LAFALLE OUT OF ME...
...I WAS ABLE TO REMEMBER THE TIME MACHINES. I'M RELIEVED.
I...
...
I...
?!
ISHI-GAMI-SAN?!
YOU'RE A GOOD PERSON..
. OKE-YA-KUN
I'M SORRY...
I JUST GOT UPSET AND HIT YOU.
I DIDN'T DO ANY-THING...

.. HARD FOR ME...
...TO...
HATE YOU.
IT'S .

UH, ISHIGAMI-SAN?!
HUH? WHAT?!
IT'S NOT FAIR...
WHY ARE YOU ABLE TO...
CRY AND LAUGH.
SO .
..MUCH ?

I...
ISHI--!
UH--!
...DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO ANY-MORE..
I...

SINCE THE DAY YOU TRANS-FERRED TO OUR SCHOOL...
...I--!
I- I LOVE YOU!

GRAB
ガシ。

WHAT?
WHAT?
WHAT?
WHAT?
WHAT?
WHAT?
WHAT?
...

CIRCLE 31
CONFESSION 2

ISHI
I.
ISHI

SINCE THE DAY YOU TRANS-FERRED TO OUR SCHOOL...
...I...
I...
I LOVE YOU!

WHAT?!

WHAT?
WHAT?
WHAT?
...
WHAT?
I THOUGHT THAT MIGHT BE THE CASE...
BUT IT LOOKS LIKE I SHOULDN'T HAVE WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
SO, UM...
I WENT TO LOOK FOR YOU
UMI SAID YOU WEREN'T HOME YET AND YOU'D BEEN ACTING WEIRD...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
NONO?

!
I HOPE YOU FIND HAPPINESS TOGETHER!!
WAIT, NON--
BYE!
DASH
UM...
ACK!
RUNE!!
UH, YEAH. OKAY.
EAST!! GO AFTER RUNE!!
...

I'M GOING HOME.
WE CAN LET EAST HANDLE RUNE.
FLIP
TURN
I'M NOT SURE, BUT..
FOLLOW UP? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
YOU SHOULD FOLLOW UP WITH NONO
...
OH...
ARENT YOU GOING TO RESPOND TO MY CONFESSION?
UM...
...COULD NEVER DATE.
YOU AND I...

YOU BETTER GIVE UP.

THE NEXT DAY
THAT NIGHT RUNE DIDN'T COME HOME.
RUNE AND EAST WERE MISSING, TOO.
AFTER ALL, SHE TOLD ME, "NEVER; YOU BETTER GIVE UP."
MY CONFESSION MUST HAVE REALLY DISGUSTED HER.
I SEE. SHE'S BEDRIDDEN NOW BECAUSE SHE'S SO UPSET.
ISHIGAMI-SAN DIDN'T COME TO SCHOOL.
U-UMI...
SHE TOLD ME EVERYTHING.
WHAT'S WITH THE POSE?
WHAT'S GOING ON, UMI?
LET ME TALK TO YOU FOR A SECOND.
YOU, WITH THE EYEBROWS

WHO KNOWS?
WHAT'S GOING ON?
UMI, DON'T HURT HIM.
?
YANK
TETSU, DAIKI, I NEED TO BORROW FUUTA FOR A MINUTE.
THAT'S NOT YOUR BUSINESS.
URGH.
SO WHAT?
YOU CONFESSED YOUR FEELINGS TO KOKO?
FUUTA.
ALSO, WHY ISN'T KOKO AT SCHOOL TODAY? WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED?
SO HOW DID IT TURN OUT?
WHEW
YOU'RE JUST CURIOUS?
I-IT IS MY BUSINESS.
YOU AND KOKO ARE MY FRIENDS

WELL...
THE RESULT?
THE RESULT..

THIS ISSUE IS BETWEEN FUUTA AND KOKO!!
WE SHOULDN'T FORCE HIM TO TELL US!
DON'T!!
IT'S NOT OUR BUSINESS!

AFTER ALL, I KNOW
IT'S FINE. YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL ME EVERYTHING
SWIP
BUT YOU SAID YOU WERE CURIOUS.

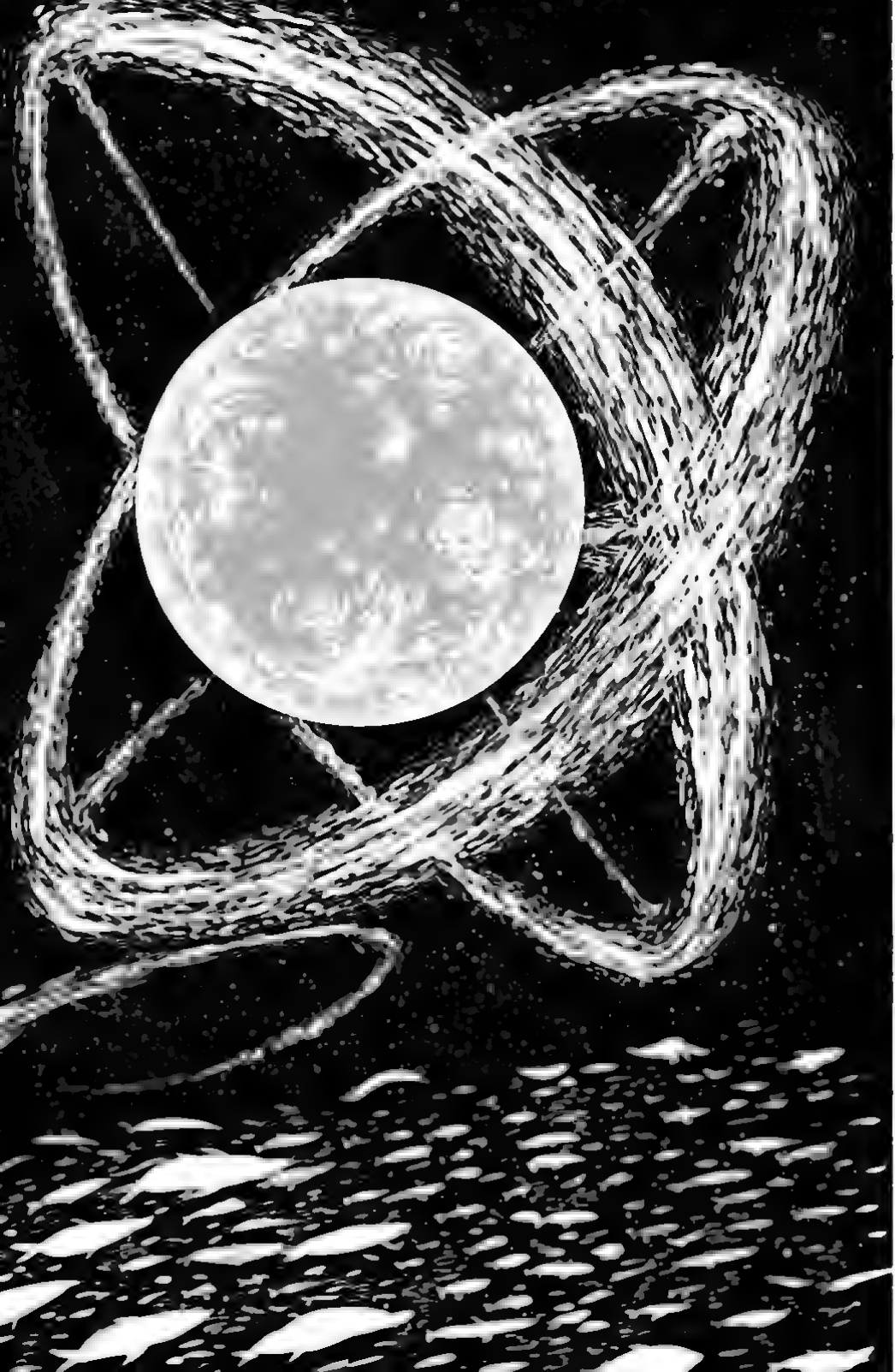
YOU MAKE A GREAT COUPLE!!
I'LL SUPPORT YOUR RELATIONSHIP!!

I SEE...
SHE RE-JECTED ME.
SO HOW DID IT TURN OUT?
DASH
I HOPE YOU FIND HAPPINESS TOGETHER!!
AGAIN?
DON'T LAUGH!!
THAT'S HILARI-OUS.
PFFPT
SNICKER
SNICKER
ISN'T IT BECAUSE SHE LOATHED MY AFFECTION SO MUCH SHE'S BEDRIDDEN NOW?
BUT I WONDER WHY SHE SKIPPED SCHOOL.
DON'T TELL ME YOU HAVEN'T NOTICED.
WHAT?
ABOUT NONO.
BUT WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
IS IT TRUE?
IS...

NONO LIKES YOU.
OF COURSE IT IS. EVERYONE KNOWS.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "GO"?
なんだ マシも
"WEIRD" IN WHAT WAY?
YEAH, IT WOULD BE.
BUT IT'D BE WEIRD FOR YOU TO GO TO NONO AFTER KOKO REJECTED YOU.
YOU DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THAT RIGHT NOW, DO YOU?
成績 ヤバい
YOUR GRADES ARE LOOKING GRIM.
WHY DON'T YOU CLEAR UP YOUR YOUTH WHILE YOU CAN?
WE'LL BE STUDYING FOR ENTRANCE EXAMS SOON.
I DIDN'T SAY THAT!!
柔道チョップ!!
JUDO CHOP!!
WHUD
DON'T CALL ME AN OLD LADY!!
...MY MOM?!
WHO ARE YOU...
...DO YOU LIKE ANYONE?
BY THE WAY...
I DON'T KNOW.
GENERALLY SPEAKING.
WHAT KIND OF MOTHER INTERFERES IN HER SON'S ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS?

hi
HMM.
WELL, I GUESS IT CAN'T HURT...
IF YOU TELL ANY-ONE...
...I'LL CHOKE YOU OUT.
SQUEEZE YOU LIKE THIS!
IT'S A SECRET.
WHAT?!
I'M GLAD YOU BECAME GOOD FRIENDS WITH LIHANERRA
I FELT AS THOUGH FLORS WAS LAUGHING INSIDE ME
WHEN I LOOKED AT THE SKY.

I FEEL LAFALLE NEVER REPAID THE DEBT HE OWED CAROL.
WHAT ABOUT NONO?
..GRAND-PA FLORS.
LAFALLE AND RIFFLE WERE GOOD FRIENDS, TOO...
WAS LAFALLE ABLE TO REPAY HIS DEBT IN HIS NEXT LIFE?
HIS DEBT TO AKARI
THAT NIGHT, I HAD A DREAM



HEE HEE. ISN'T IT AMAZING?
WHAT IS THIS?

I'M BACK...?
OH, I'M SORRY
RUNE?!

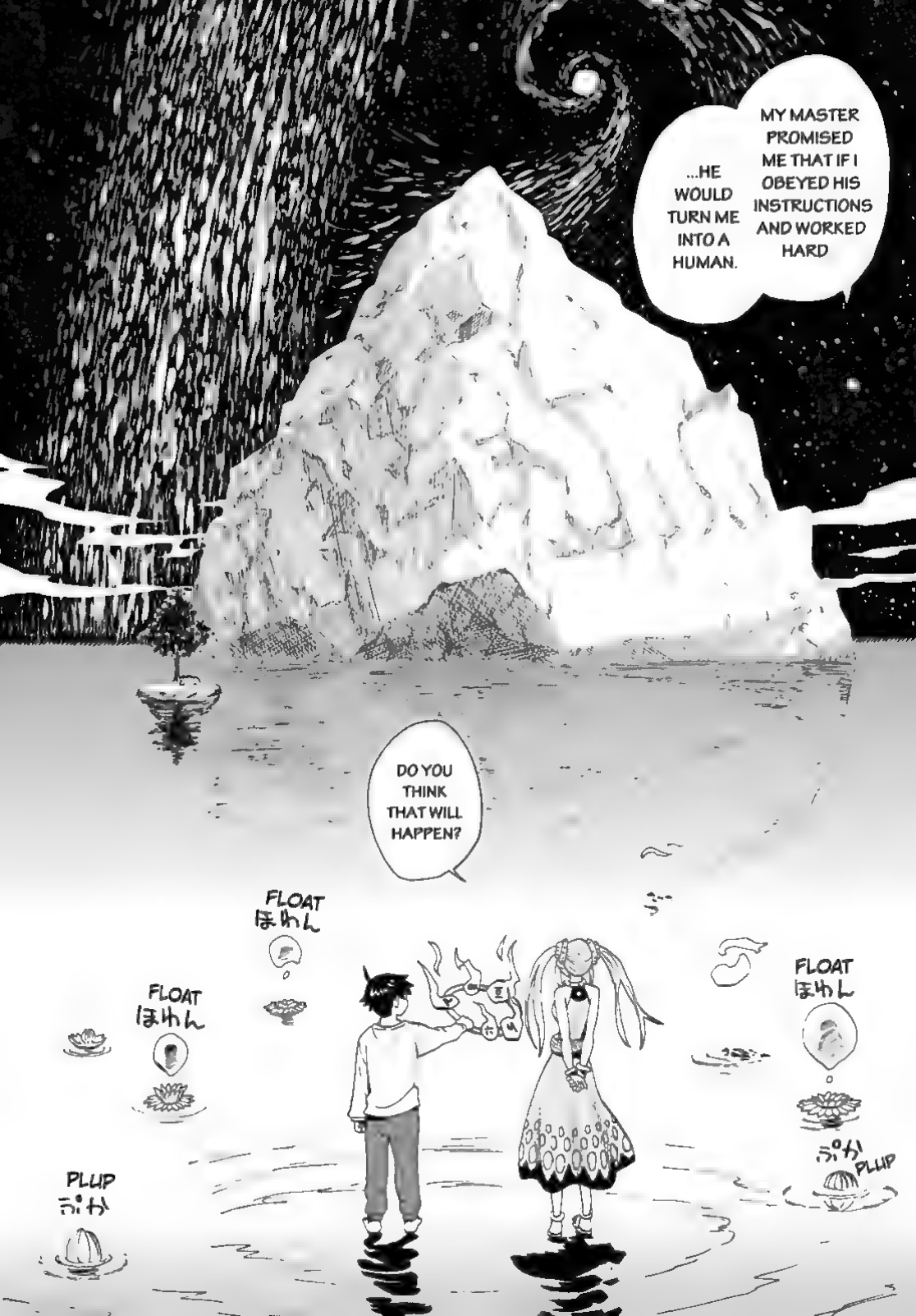
THE CIRCLE IS, UM...
GIVE ME BACK MY CIRCLE.
WELL, WHAT-EVER...

MY MASTER THINKS SOME TERRIFYING THINGS.
THAT'S NOT ALL...
I PROMISE I'LL WAIT ABOUT TEN DAYS TO WATCH MY NEXT LIFE
YOU WERE WORRIED THAT I WAS SEEING TOO MANY PAST LIVES IN RAPID SUCCESSION, RIGHT?

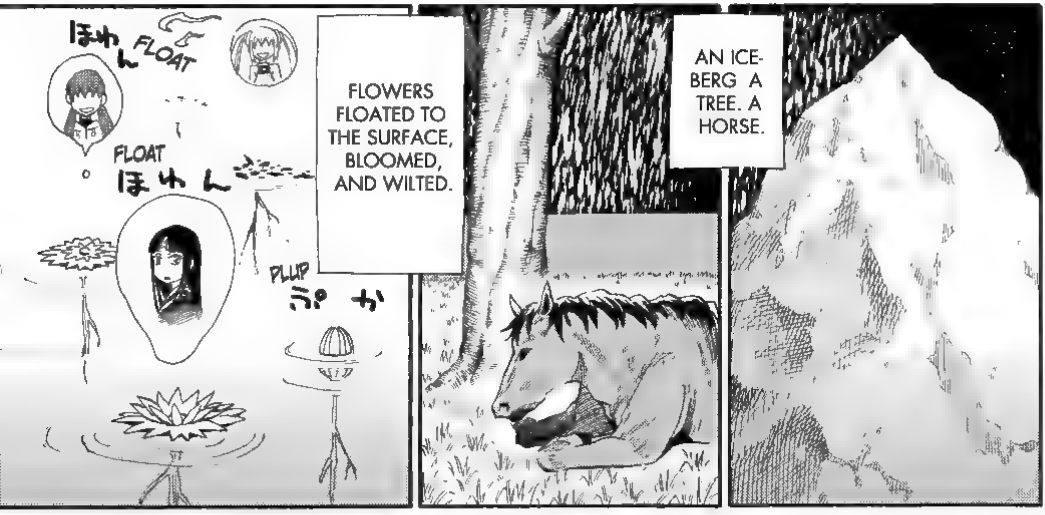
IT'S FORTUNA, ISN'T IT?
...
BUT I'M NOT THINKING ANYTHING.
?
HE'S ALREADY DEAD. WHAT IS HE PLANNING?
I CAN'T TELL YOU I'M SORRY.
UM, WHY DON'T YOU STOP WATCHING YOUR PAST LIVES?
YOU'RE STARTING TO SOUND LIKE EAST.
BUT MASTER, EVERY TIME YOU SEE A PAST LIFE, YOU WAKE UP WITH A STRANGE EXPRESSION ON YOUR FACE
YOU MAKE LOTS OF GRIM AND SAD EXPRESSIONS
MASTER, YOU SHOULD SMILE AND LAUGH...
SNIF-FLE
...MORE OFTEN.
WHIM-PER

I'VE SEEN A LOT OF CRYING GIRLS LATELY.
YOU ALWAYS MAKE GIRLS CRY
NO, I DON'T!
HA HA HA!
I'M KIDDING, MASTER.
UH. .
I-IN ANY CASE, WHATEVER FORTUNA'S THINKING, I WONDER WHAT ISHIGAMI-SAN INTENDS TO DO?
I'M GOING TO SEE MY PAST LIVES.
I ONLY HAVE A FEW LEFT. I CAN'T STOP NOW.

I SEE.
LEAVE TIME BETWEEN YOUR VIEWINGS
GLEAM
HERE I'LL GIVE THIS BACK TO YOU.
I'M AN ARTIFICIAL SPIRIT HE CREATED.
EITHER WAY, I CAN'T DISOBEY MY MASTER WHEN HE IS SERIOUS

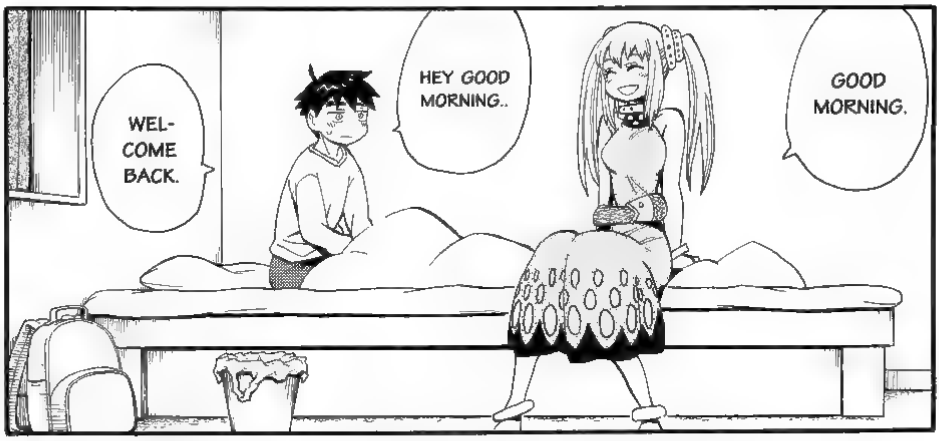

MY MASTER PROMISED ME THAT IF I OBEYED HIS INSTRUCTIONS AND WORKED HARD
...HE WOULD TURN ME INTO A HUMAN.
DO YOU THINK THAT WILL HAPPEN?
FLOAT ほわん
FLOAT ほわん
FLOAT ほわん
PLUP ぷか
ぷか PLUP

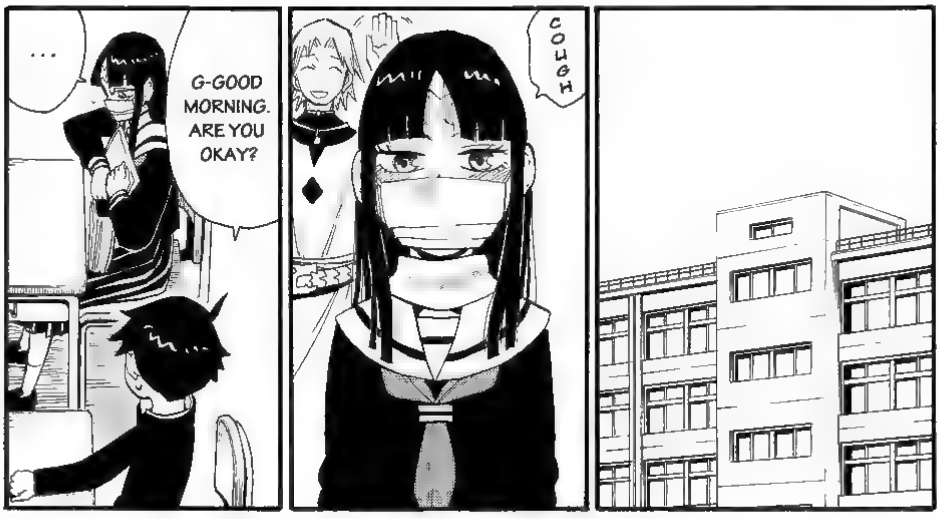
HEE HEE.
REALLY?
AT SOME POINT, THE SCENERY CHANGED
I THINK YOU'RE PLENTY HUMAN ALREADY.
6


ほわん FLOAT
FLOAT ほわん
FLOWERS FLOATED TO THE SURFACE, BLOOMED, AND WILTED.
PLUP ぷか
AN ICE-BERG A TREE. A HORSE.

HER COLD ISN'T SERIOUS, SO SHE SHOULD PROBABLY BE AT SCHOOL TOMORROW.
I WAS KEEPING HER COMPANY.
KOKO-CHAN CAUGHT A COLD FROM THINKING TOO LONG IN THE BATHTUB
KOKO-CHAN'S HOUSE.
IT'S MY WORLD.
WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN THE PAST COUPLE DAYS?
ほわん FLOAT
風邪か
IT'S A COLD.
I SEE.

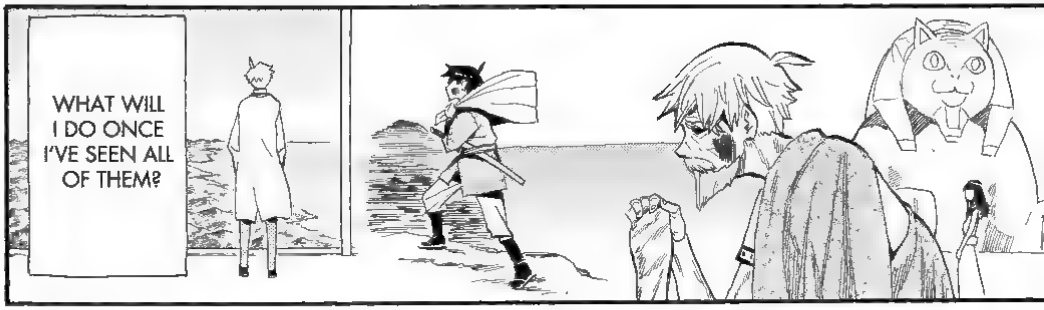
FOR SOME REASON, THE VAPORS EXPELLED FROM THE FLOWERS CONTAINED GIRLS' FACES.
I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE MYSELF.
FLOAT
ほわん
FLOAT
ほわん
PLUP
ぷか
FLOAT
ほわん
PLUP
ぷか

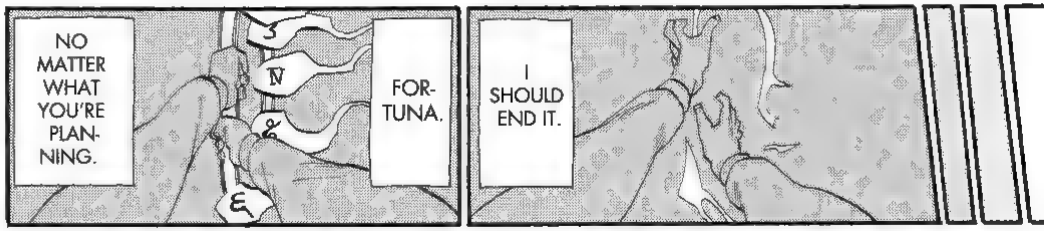

WEL-COME BACK.
HEY GOOD MORNING..
GOOD MORNING.


...
G-GOOD MORNING. ARE YOU OKAY?
COUGH

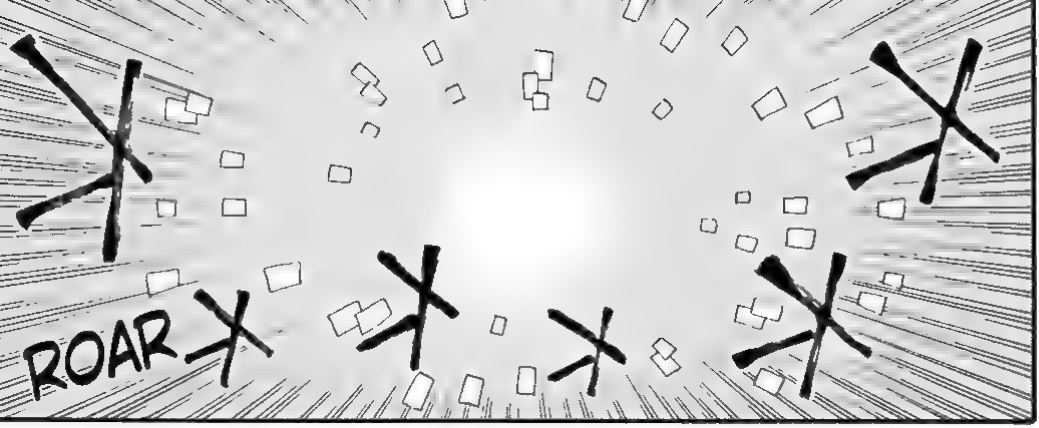
1.
CHAL-
LENGE
I CHAL-
LENGE
YOU TO
A DUEL.
...
PAFF
ARE YOU
OKAY?
KOKO-CHAN,
GOOD MORN-
ING
I'M
FINE...
GOOD--
COUGH
BEFORE THEN,
YOU MUST SEE
THE REMAINING
LIVES, NUMBER
SEVEN AND
NUMBER ONE.
2.
THE NIGHT OF
THE SECOND
FRIDAY OF THE
NEXT MONTH.
WE WILL MEET
IN THE PARK
FOR A BATTLE
TO THE DEATH.
...ON
THE
FINAL
DAY.
ISHI-
GAMI
KOU-
KO
BUT I WILL
TELL YOU
HOW I FEEL
ABOUT
YOU...
3.
NO MATTER
HOW GOOD
A PERSON
YOU ARE, IT
CANNOT
CHANGE THE
FACT THAT
I MUST KILL
YOU.
TWO
MORE.

TWO MORE.
THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY THAT BEGAN AS SUMMER CAME TO A CLOSE WILL END SOON.


WHAT WILL I DO ONCE I'VE SEEN ALL OF THEM?


NO MATTER WHAT YOU'RE PLAN-NING.
FOR-TUNA.
I SHOULD END IT.

I WILL!!
...I WILL PUT AN END TO THIS DESTINY.

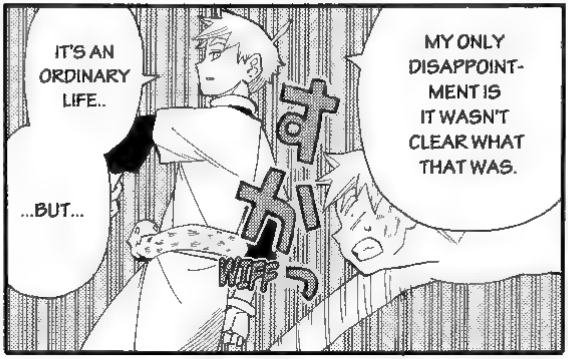

ROAR

IT'S UN-REMARKABLE, UNEVENTFUL, AND WITHOUT CONFLICT.
YOUR NEXT PAST LIFE IS PRETTY DULL.

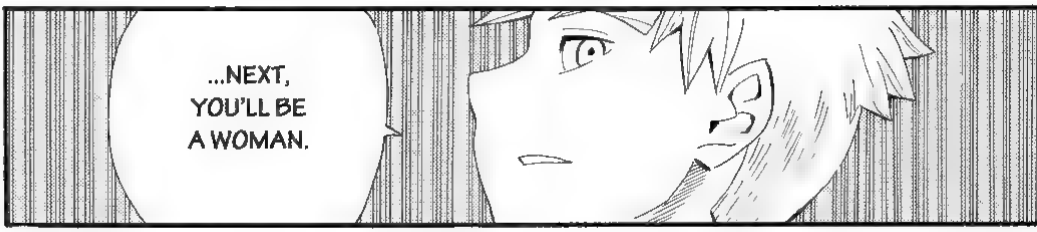
UNFOR-TUNATELY, I HAVE SOME BAD NEWS FOR YOU
HEY
LAFALLE'S LIFE WAS IN-TERESTING, WASN'T IT?

ALTHOUGH IT MAY BE MORE INTERESTING GIVEN THE ORDER IN WHICH YOU'VE VIEWED YOUR LIVES.
I'M ALMOST JEALOUS.
AFTER ALL, THE NEXT PLACE YOU'RE HEADED
DON'T START WITH A SPOILER!
HEY!

YOU'LL CLEARLY EXPERIENCE ANOTHER WORLD LIKE YOU NEVER HAVE BEFORE.
...IS ONLY A SLIGHT SHIFT IN POSSIBILITY FROM YOUR COORDINATES IN SPACE-TIME.


IT'S AN ORDINARY LIFE..
...BUT...
すかっ
WIFF
MY ONLY DISAPPOINT-MENT IS IT WASN'T CLEAR WHAT THAT WAS.

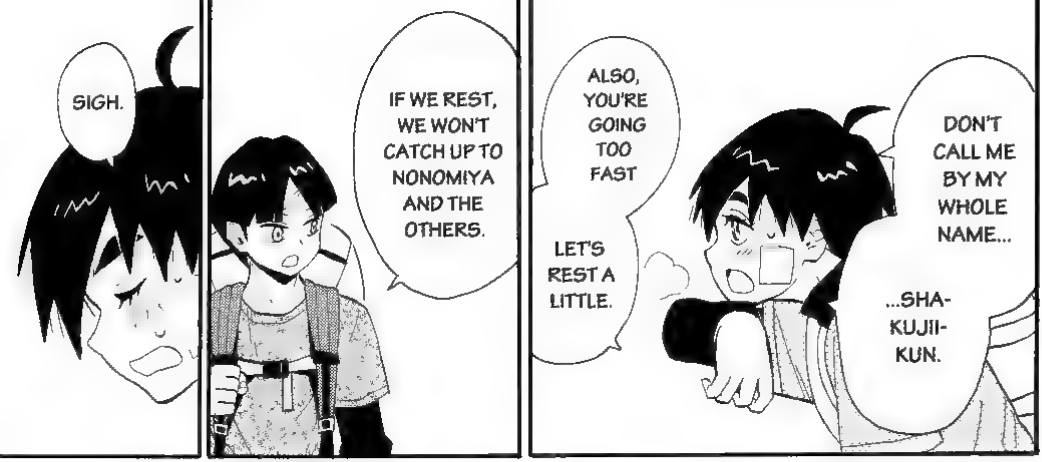
I DON'T UNDER-STAND!
ANO-THER WORLD ?!
REACH


...NEXT, YOU'LL BE A WOMAN.

OH.. I FORGOT TO ASK HIM ABOUT THE FU-TURE DESTRUC-TION OF THE WORLD. .
WHY DID HE COME SPEAK TO ME THIS TIME...?
SEE YA.
A...
...WO-MAN?!

CIRCLE 32
FUUKO

WHEW.
OKEYA FUUKO!
HURRY UP OR WE'LL GET SEPARATED AGAIN!
OKE-YA!

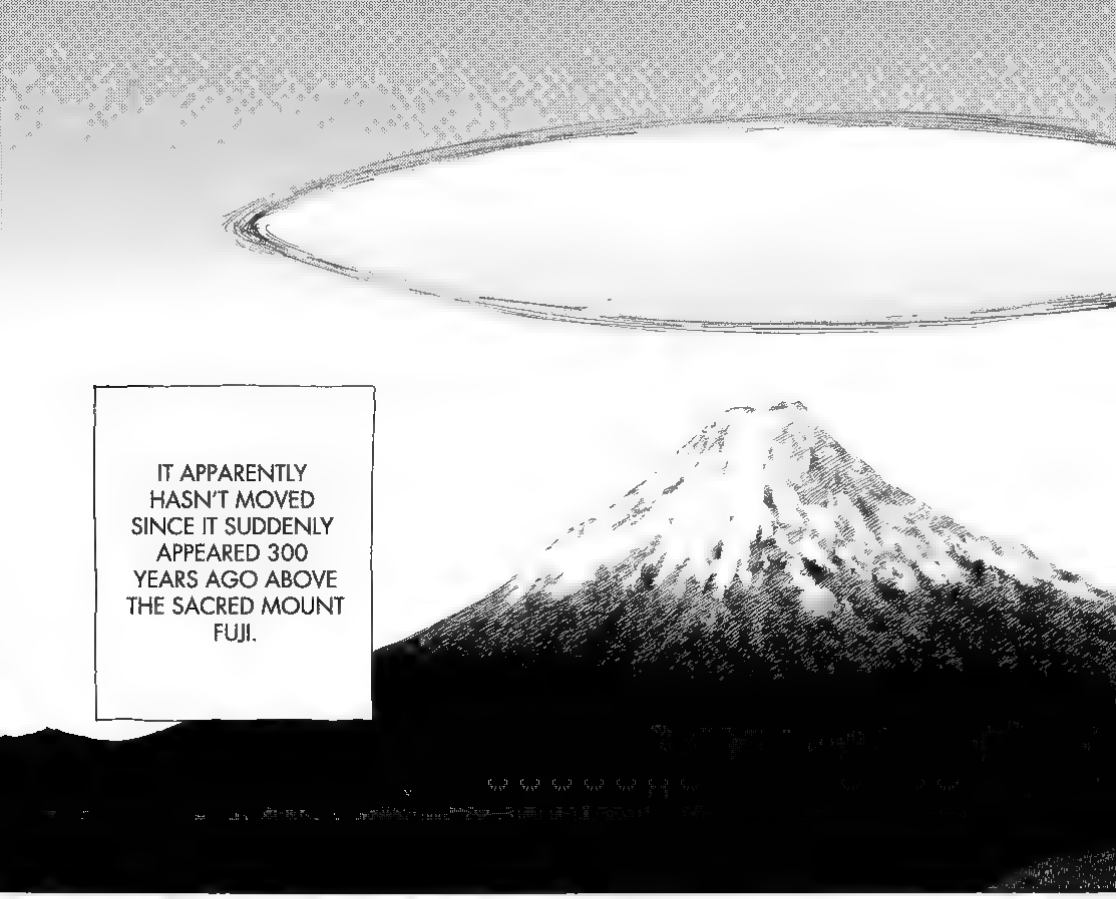

SIGH.
IF WE REST, WE WON'T CATCH UP TO NONOMIYA AND THE OTHERS.
ALSO, YOU'RE GOING TOO FAST
LET'S REST A LITTLE.
DON'T CALL ME BY MY WHOLE NAME...
...SHA-KUJII-KUN.

DO YOU KNOW A LOT ABOUT MOUNTAINS?
NOTH-ING.
NOT AT ALL.
YOU IDIOT.
IF OUR GROUP GETS ANY MORE SEPARATED, IT'LL BE A DIS-ASTER.
YOU GO ON AHEAD, THEN.
THERE'S ONLY ONE PATH. EVEN IF WE GET SEPA-RATED...

PULL
IN ANY CASE, WALK.
SIGH

...TO INVES-TIGATE WHAT "THAT" WAS.
WE CAME TO THE MOUN-TAINS...

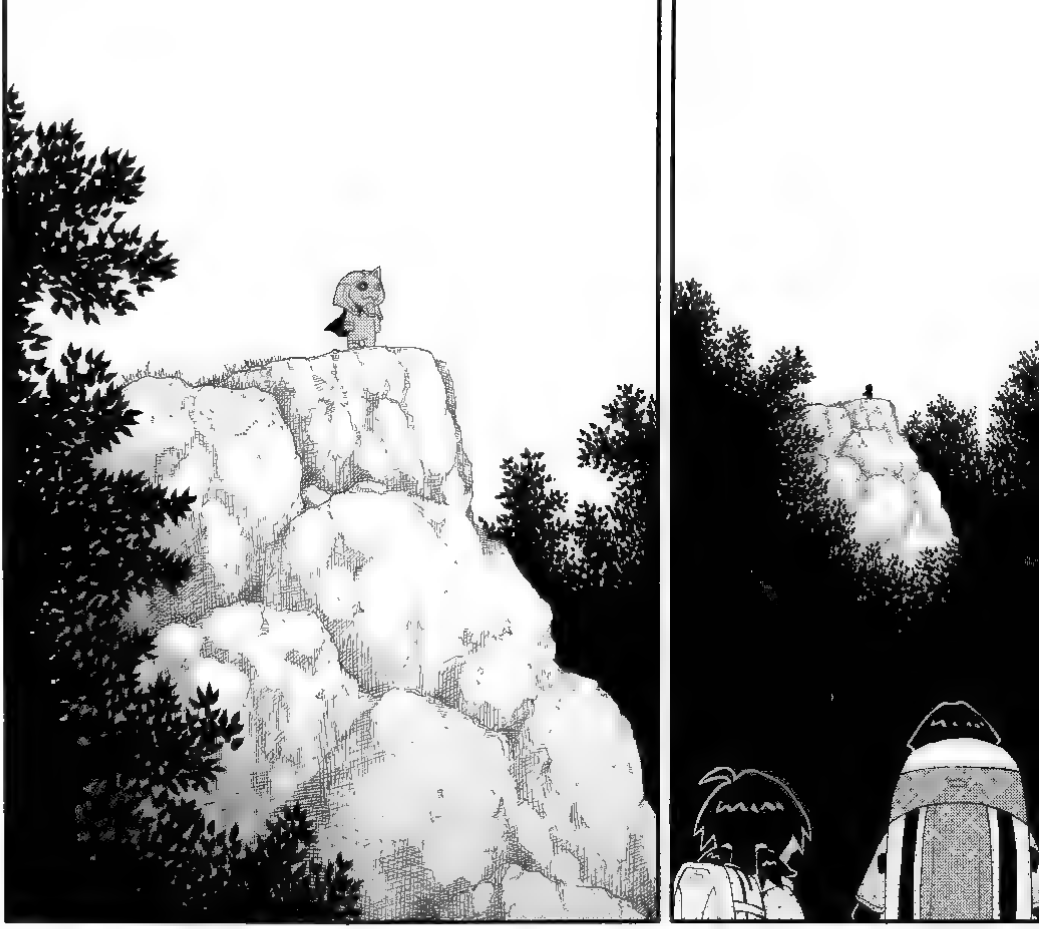
THE 91ST YEAR OF THE SYOU-WA ERA.
EVEN THOUGH WE'VE ENTERED A SCIENTIFIC ERA IN WHICH COMPUTER NETWORKS COVER THE GLOBE, WE STILL DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT IS.
THIS MASSIVE FLOATING STATIC OBJECT COMMONLY KNOWN AS THE "FUJI ROOF."
...BUT WE'RE STAVING OFF BOREDOM OVER OUR SUMMER BREAK BY SOLVING THE MYSTERIES OF THE FUJI ROOF!
WHEW
IT'S BECOME SUCH A NORMAL PART OF THE SCENERY THAT HARDLY ANYONE EXPRESSES ANY INTEREST IN IT...


IT APPARENTLY HASN'T MOVED SINCE IT SUDDENLY APPEARED 300 YEARS AGO ABOVE THE SACRED MOUNT FUJI.

CHAPTER 7
"FUUKO"

I'M SURE THEY'RE NOT TRYING TO GET AWAY FROM US.
I WISH I COULD TELL YOU IT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE SLOW, BUT IT IS ODD.
WHY. .
WHY HAVEN'T WE CAUGHT UP TO THE OTHERS YET?
I HEARD NONOMIYA CONFESSED TO YOU.
PFFFT!
GLUG
GLUG
GLUG
STEP
I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT.
WE SHOULD GET GOING.
YOU HAVEN'T RESPONDED YET, RIGHT? WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT?!
COUGH
TH-THAT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS!

IT'S NOT THAT I DON'T LIKE NON...
COME TO THINK OF IT, PEOPLE CALL HIM "NON," RIGHT?
I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS, EITHER.
..BUT I'M AFRAID OF RUINING AN OLD FRIENDSHIP.
POUND, HUH.
DON'T CALL ME A NERD.
HAVE YOU EVER FELT YOUR HEART POUND?
I'M NOT SURPRISED THAT A NERD LIKE YOU DOESN'T UNDERSTAND ROMANCE.
HEY!
YES?!
OKE-YA!
LOOK.
IT WAS POUNDING EARLIER.



WHIRRR
CLICK
CLICK
CLICK
CLICK
CLICK
CLICK

FSSH
IT... DISAP-PEARED...
LET'S GO CHECK IT OUT.

I'VE SEEN RUMORS ABOUT HIM ONLINE.
.SHOULDN'T WE STAY ON THE TRAIL?
WHAT? BUT...

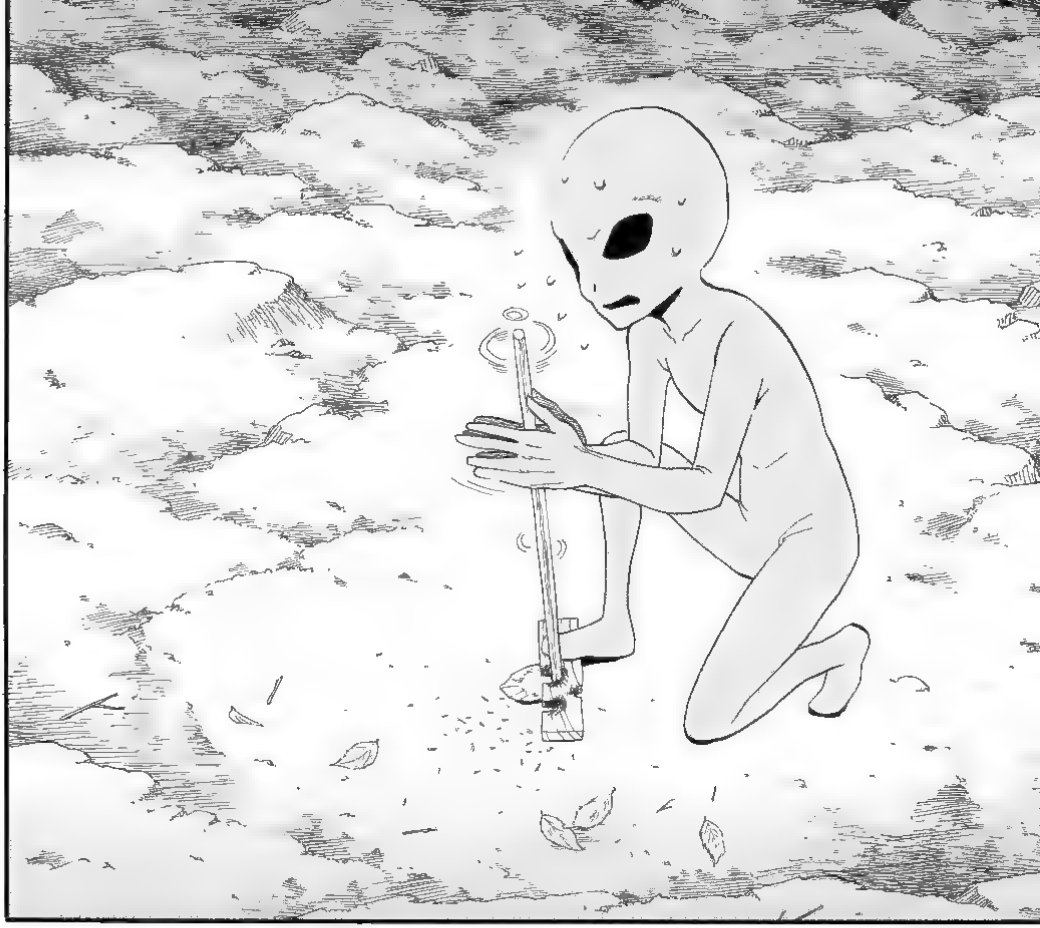
WE'RE GOING TO SOLVE THIS, RIGHT?
LET'S GO.
BUT HE MAY HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE FUJI ROOF.
WHO KNOWS?
STEP
THEN HE LOOKED UP AT THE SKY AND DISAP-PEARED.
WHY WOULD HE DO THAT?
SOMEONE SAW HIM DEEP IN THE MOUNTAINS OF SOME COUNTRY, STANDING JUST LIKE THAT.

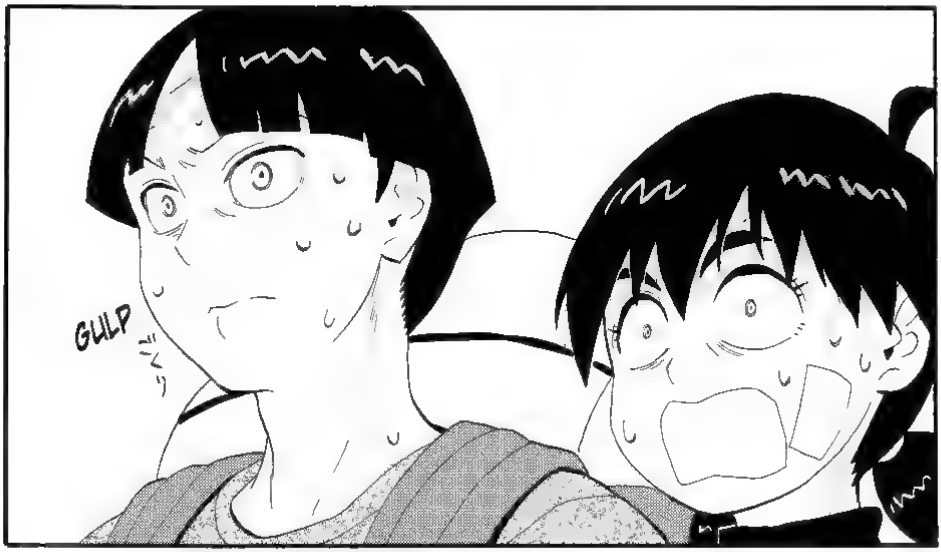
HMPH
I DON'T MIND HELPING YOU A LITTLE BIT.
WELL, EVERYONE BESIDES YOU JUST CAME TO ENJOY CAMPING.
HEADING INTO THE UNKNOWN IS AN ADVENTURE.
MY HEART WAS POUNDING.
IT WAS AN ADVENTURE.
PSYCHOLOGY
ARCHAEOLOGY
PHYSICS
THERE ARE MANY THINGS I WANT TO KNOW.
I WANT TO BECOME SMARTER.
...I WANT TO KNOW MORE
WHATEVER ACADEMIC FIELD I CHOOSE TO PURSUE IN THE FUTURE ..

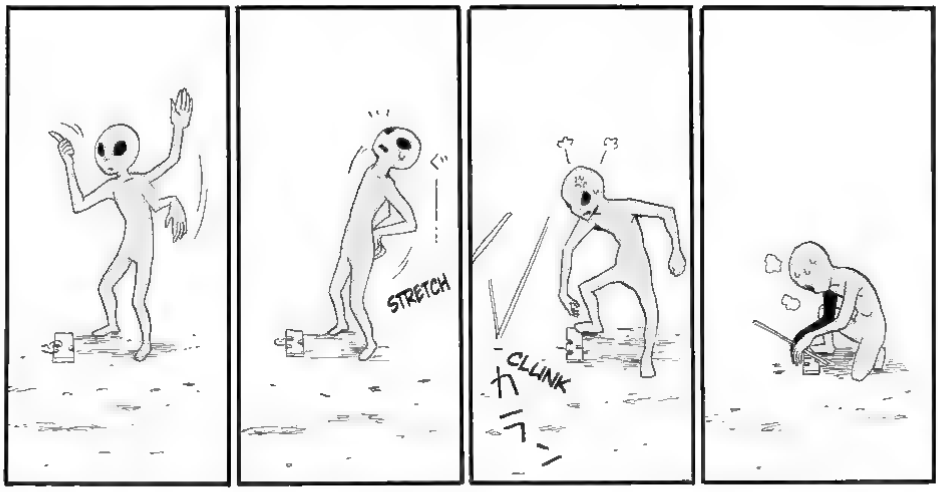
EVERY UN-
KNOWN
WILL BE
KNOWN!
I DON'T
CARE IF IT
MAKES ME
A NERD!
I HAVE TO
KNOW!
LET'S GO!
THE UN-
KNOWN
IS THERE!

...
?

...
LOOK
CLOSELY.
AT THE
PERSON.
THERE'S
A PER-
SON
?
IT'S A
CAVE,
AND
...?
WHAT...
WHAT'S
WRONG?
THERE..
IN
FRONT
OF US.




GULP

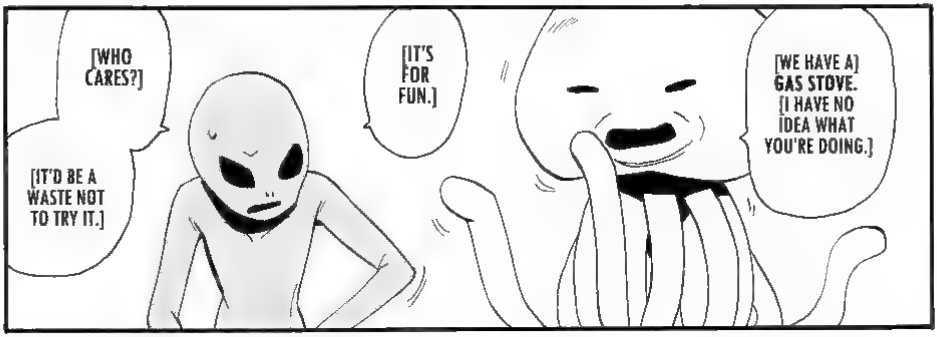

STRETCH
CLLINK

IT TOLD US TO COME HERE.
STEP
I-IT JUST... WAVED AT US, DIDN'T IT?
IT'S AN E-EXTRA-TERR... NO . !!
IT MUST BE A COS-TUME... RIGHT?
DO YOU WANT TO CHECK IT OUT...?

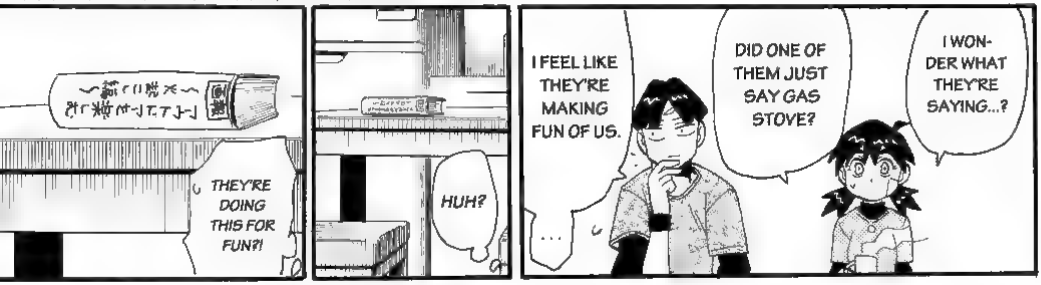
WHAT IS THAT?

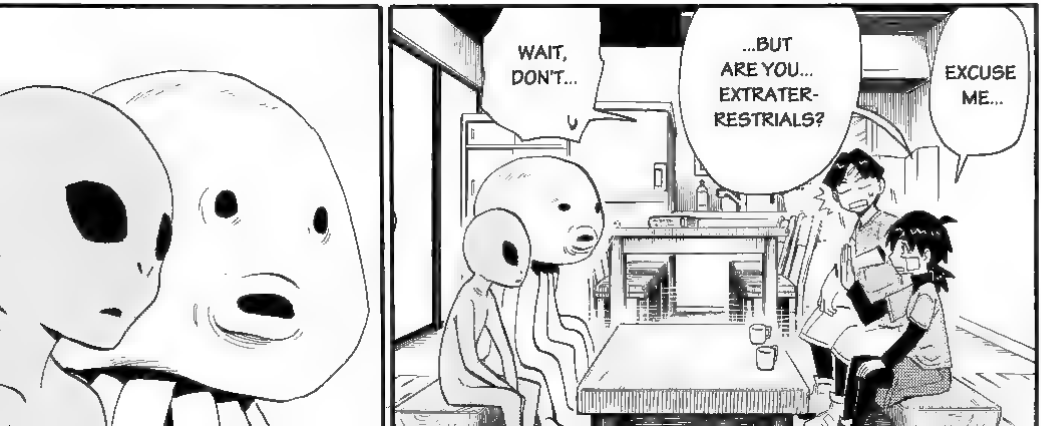
SERI-OUSLY?
PARDON THE INTRU-SION.

[THE SPACE-TIME PROBE ARRIVED.]
[DID YOU SEE IT?]
[OH, DO YOU WANT] COFFEE?
[YEAH. THESE TWO WERE DRAWN TO IT.]
[OH, JUST] COFFEE [FOR THESE TWO.]
THERE'S ANOTHER ONE.
JUST ONE?
A GAS STOVE..?
WAIT, A GAS STOVE?
DID THEY JUST SAY COFFEE?
CLINK
TICK TICK TICK
PWOOSH
CLICK
THANKS.
AN OCTO-PUS..
CLUNK
CLUNK
ANOTHER GESTURE.
MAYBE IT WANTS US TO SIT OVER THERE?

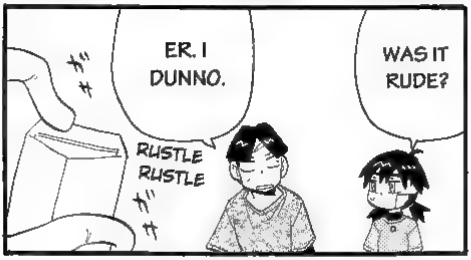


BOOK. "ENJOYING THE OUTDOORS, STARTING A FIRE"


THEY'RE DOING THIS FOR FUN?!
HUH?
I FEEL LIKE THEY'RE MAKING FUN OF US.
DID ONE OF THEM JUST SAY GAS STOVE?
I WONDER WHAT THEY'RE SAYING...?



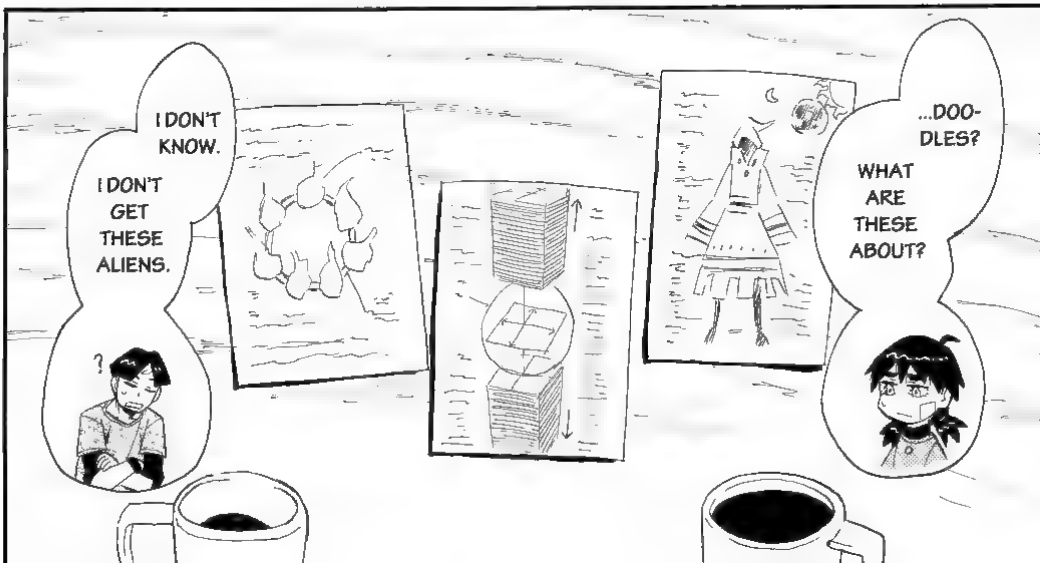
DON'T BE SO RUDE!
THEY'RE LAUGHING?!

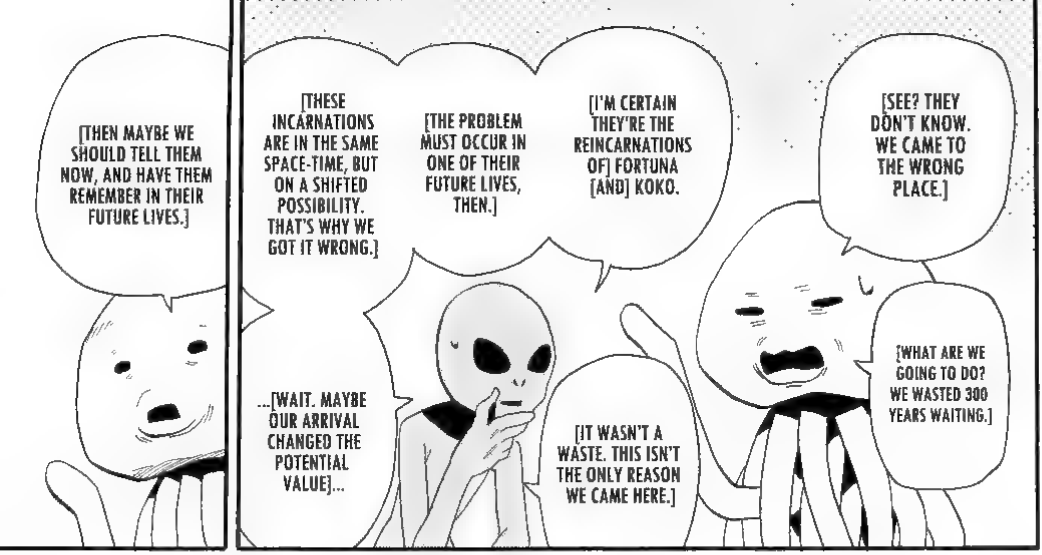

ER. I DUNNO.
WAS IT RUDE?
RUSTLE RUSTLE

GUFFAW
[YOU'RE A GENIUS!]
[SEE? THEY GOT IT! I KNEW WE CHOSE THE RIGHT OUTFITS!]
[THE EARTHLINGS CAME UP WITH THESE DESIGNS, TOO.]
[I GUESS THAT'S WHY THESE WORKED]
[I WONDER WHAT THEY'D THINK IF THEY SAW WHAT WE REALLY LOOK LIKE.]

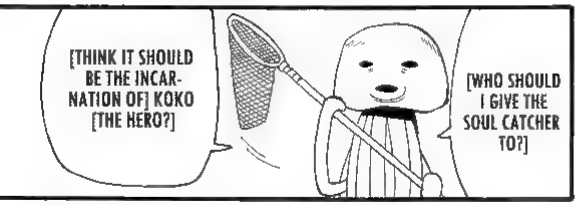
DO THEY WANT US TO LOOK AT THEM?
..WHAT?

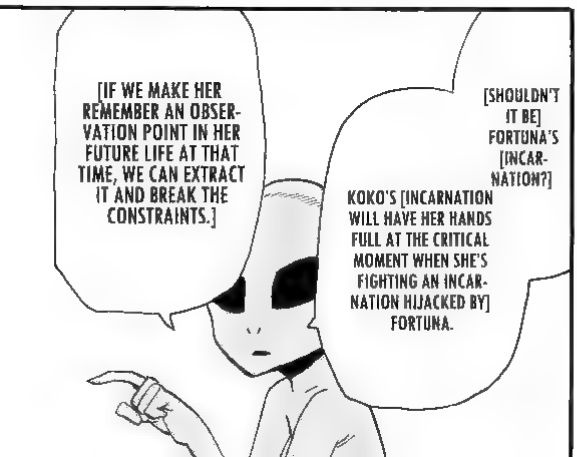
?
?
SHUFFLE

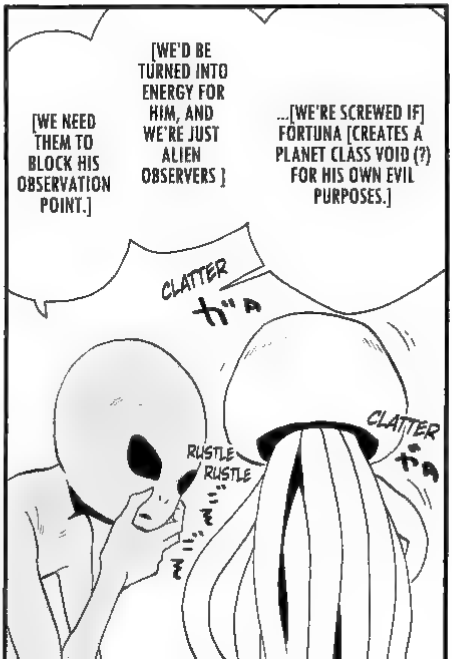

I DON'T KNOW.
I DON'T GET THESE ALIENS.
?
...DOODLES?
WHAT ARE THESE ABOUT?

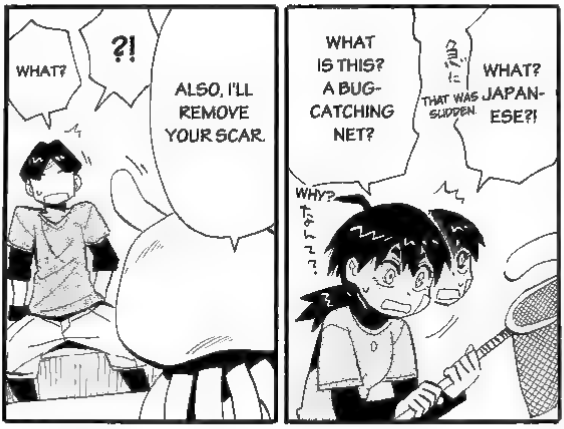

[THEN MAYBE WE SHOULD TELL THEM NOW, AND HAVE THEM REMEMBER IN THEIR FUTURE LIVES.]
[THESE INCARNATIONS ARE IN THE SAME SPACE-TIME, BUT ON A SHIFTED POSSIBILITY. THAT'S WHY WE GOT IT WRONG.]
[THE PROBLEM MUST OCCUR IN ONE OF THEIR FUTURE LIVES, THEN.]
[I'M CERTAIN THEY'RE THE REINCARNATIONS OF] FORTUNA [AND] KOKO.
[SEE? THEY DON'T KNOW. WE CAME TO THE WRONG PLACE.]
...[WAIT. MAYBE OUR ARRIVAL CHANGED THE POTENTIAL VALUE]...
[IT WASN'T A WASTE. THIS ISN'T THE ONLY REASON WE CAME HERE.]
[WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO? WE WASTED 300 YEARS WAITING.]

[WE'LL GIVE THEM THIS SOUL CATCHER DISGUISED AS A BUG-CATCHING NET.]
[LET'S GO WITH THAT, THEN.]
...FORTUNA [IS ONE RIDICULOUS GUY.]
FORTUNA [COULD BE OBSERVING THIS LIFE RIGHT NOW.]
[SURE, BUT LET'S MAKE THEM FORGET UNTIL THE RIGHT TIME IN THEIR FUTURE LIVES.]
[OKAY.]


[THINK IT SHOULD BE THE INCAR-NATION OF] KOKO [THE HERO?]
[WHO SHOULD I GIVE THE SOUL CATCHER TO?]


[IF WE MAKE HER REMEMBER AN OBSER-VATION POINT IN HER FUTURE LIFE AT THAT TIME, WE CAN EXTRACT IT AND BREAK THE CONSTRAINTS.]
[SHOULDN'T IT BE] FORTUNA'S [INCAR-NATION?]
KOKO'S [INCARNATION WILL HAVE HER HANDS FULL AT THE CRITICAL MOMENT WHEN SHE'S FIGHTING AN INCAR-NATION HIJACKED BY] FORTUNA.

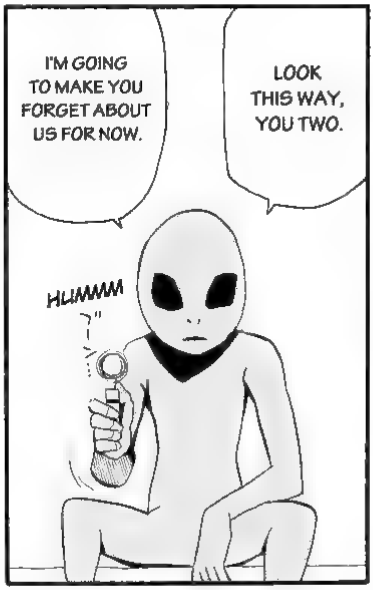

[WE NEED THEM TO BLOCK HIS OBSERVATION POINT.]
[WE'D BE TURNED INTO ENERGY FOR HIM, AND WE'RE JUST ALIEN OBSERVERS.]
...[WE'RE SCREWED IF] FORTUNA [CREATES A PLANET CLASS VOID (?) FOR HIS OWN EVIL PURPOSES.]
CLATTER
CLATTER
RUSTLE RUSTLE


WHAT?
?!
ALSO, I'LL REMOVE YOUR SCAR.
WHAT IS THIS? A BUG-CATCHING NET?
WHY?
WHAT? JAPANESE?!
THAT WAS SUDDEN.

YOU CAN HAVE THIS.
IT'S, UM..
...A GIFT.

HUH?
WHAT?
SPLAT
SPLURCH
YOU DON'T HAVE TO REMEMBER THIS TIME.
YOU PROBABLY GOT IT IN AN ACCIDENT, BUT IT MUST MAKE YOU NEARLY REMEMBER KOKO EVERY TIME YOU LOOK IN A MIRROR.

I'LL TAKE YOU TO YOUR FRIENDS.
HUMMM
DON'T WORRY.


I'M GOING TO MAKE YOU FORGET ABOUT US FOR NOW.
LOOK THIS WAY, YOU TWO.
HUMMM

SWISH

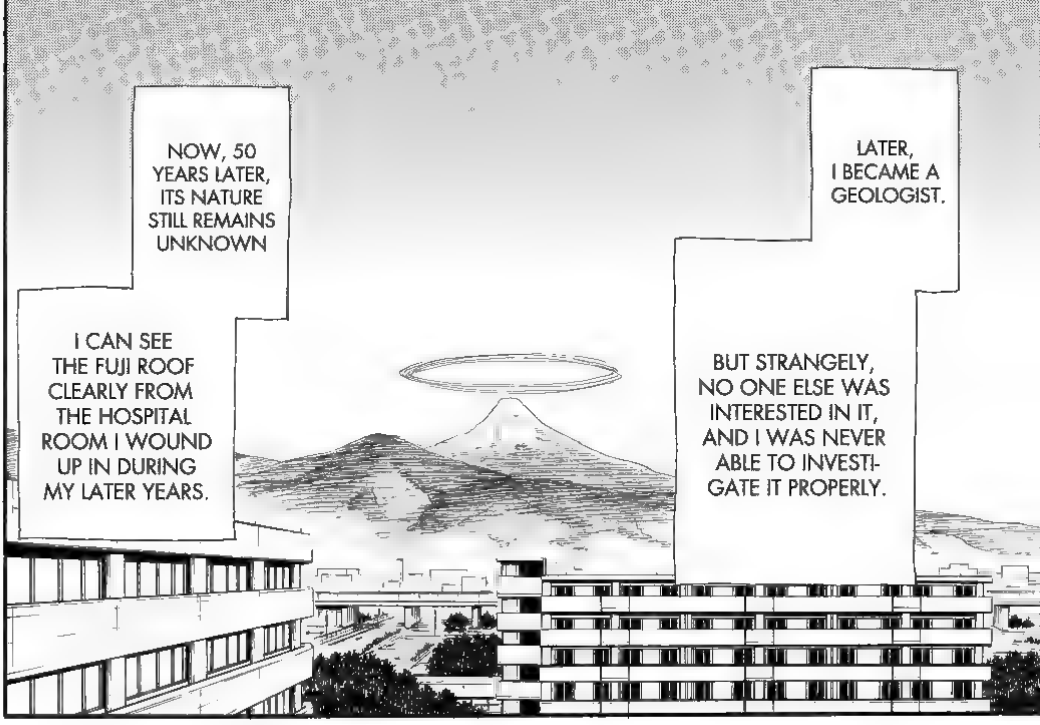
!
THIS PLACE.

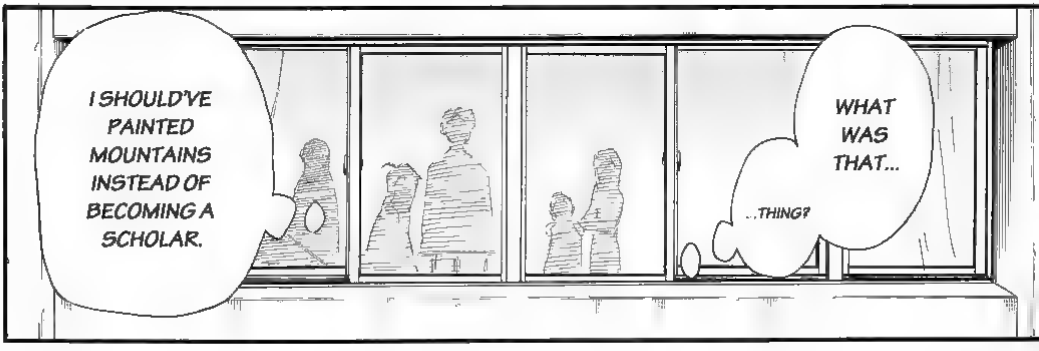
FUUKO!
THEY'RE FINALLY HERE.
KOSUKE! FUUKO!

?! KOSUKE? THE SCAR ON YOUR FOREHEAD IS GONE...
WHAT?!

?
WHERE DID YOU GET THAT NET?
YOU WERE SO LATE WE WERE WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
ARE YOU OKAY?
SORRY...
...TENKO, TAE.

MY HEART POUNDED.
GOOD.
NO... I'M FINE. THANKS, NON.
FUUKO! ARE YOU HURT?
I WANT TO STAY FRIENDS WITH SHAKUJII-KUN, TOO.
AM I ASKING FOR TOO MUCH?
I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT LOVE...
..BUT I THINK I WANT TO BE WITH NON.
...WE NEVER DISCOVERED THE TRUE NATURE OF THE FUJI ROOF.
ULTIMATELY...


NOW, 50 YEARS LATER, ITS NATURE STILL REMAINS UNKNOWN
I CAN SEE THE FUJI ROOF CLEARLY FROM THE HOSPITAL ROOM I WOUND UP IN DURING MY LATER YEARS.
LATER, I BECAME A GEOLOGIST.
BUT STRANGELY, NO ONE ELSE WAS INTERESTED IN IT, AND I WAS NEVER ABLE TO INVESTI-GATE IT PROPERLY.


I SHOULD'VE PAINTED MOUNTAINS INSTEAD OF BECOMING A SCHOLAR.
WHAT WAS THAT...
..THING?

WHAT THE HECK WAS THAT ALL ABOUT?

CIRCLE 33
DATE

RESTAURANT
SUEHIRA
BEGIN-
NING
OF DE
CEMBER
SUEHIRA

DON'T LET A FAMILY RESTAU-RANT SCARE YOU.

I DON'T HAVE THAT KIND OF MONEY...
YOU SUDDENLY INVITED ME OUT ON THE WEEKEND TO GO TO A FAMILY RESTAURANT?
MENU

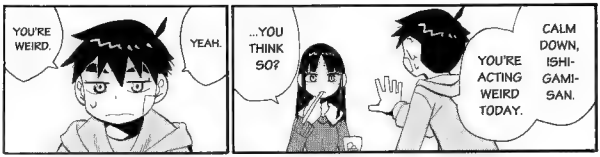
WH-WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, ISHIGAMI-SAN?
DON'T LET YOUR PAST LIFE TAKE OVER.

SOMETIMES BOYS LIKE TO TREAT CUTE GIRLS TO MEALS.
FUUKO-CHAN.

I'LL PAY.
ORDER WHATEVER YOU WANT.
YOU'LL--?! WH-WHY?!

I'M STILL FEELING THE EFFECTS.
YOU JUST SAW THAT PREVIOUS LIFE YESTERDAY.
HEY, YOU SHOULD DRESS LIKE A GIRL.
IT'LL FEEL MORE LIKE A DATE!

A D-DATE?!
I'LL DRESS LIKE A GUY!!
WANT TO TRADE CLOTHES?


CALM DOWN, ISHIGAMI-SAN.
YOU'RE ACTING WEIRD TODAY.
...YOU THINK SO?
YEAH.
YOU'RE WEIRD.

WHAT?
THIS MORNING KOUKO WAS LAUGHING WHEN SHE WOKE UP.
SHE'S BEEN LIKE THIS SINCE THEN.
YOU SEEM TO BE HAVING FUN, KOUKO-CHAN.

PFFFT--!! TENKO-CHAN AND TAE-CHAN...!!
BUT THEY WERE CUTE.
DON'T REMIND ME.
PFFFT
IN THEIR OWN WAY.

GENDER BENDING
BUT IT'S INTERESTING.

REALLY? I WISH I'D KNOWN AT THE TIME.
NON WAS POPULAR AMONG THE GIRLS... BUT SHAKUJII-KUN WAS PRETTY POPULAR, TOO.

NON .. NONOMIYA-KUN WAS PRETTY GOOD, TOO.
HE WAS HANDSOME

WE CAN GO ANYWHERE!
WHERE DO YOU WANT TO GO NEXT?

PFFFT.
HEH HEH HEH...
I'M...A LITTLE SHOCKED NOW I KNOW WHAT GIRLS GOSSIP ABOUT.

...

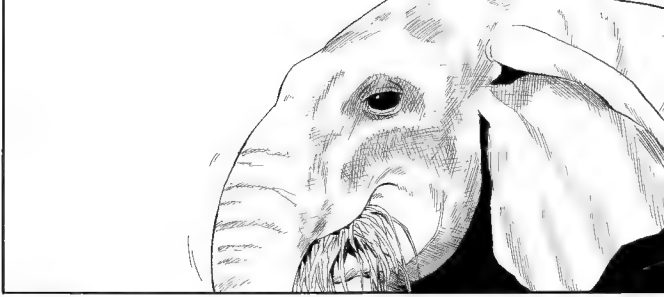
...WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO YOU, ISHIGAMI-SAN?
WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO YOU, OKEYA-KUN?
YOU'RE NOT HAPPY
...AFTER SEEING THAT PAST LIFE?
NO...
I'M HAPPY.

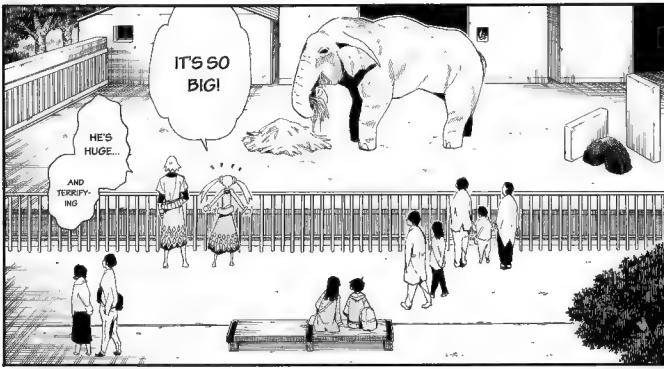
A ROBO-CAT WHOSE HEAD HAD BEEN REPAIRED.
WE SAW A ROBO-CAT.

CAROL FIXED HIM.
ROBO-CAT LIVED.
THAT ROBO-CAT SURVIVED AFTER THE MASSIVE COLLAPSE THAT KILLED US.

HU-MAN-KIND. .
THE EARTH .
SO LET'S CELEBRATE.
THEY WEREN'T DESTROYED.

YOU'RE THE ONLY PERSON WHO I CAN SHARE THIS HAPPINESS WITH.
LET'S HANG OUT TODAY.
WHOA.
ISHI-GAMI-SAN...
...CAN SMILE LIKE THAT...?
STAY OUT OF THIS, OLD MAN INSIDE ME!
LIQUOR.
IF WE'RE CELEBRAT-ING, LET'S DRINK.
CREEP
I'D LIKE A DRINK, TOO.
LIQUOR.
I DON'T LIKE THAT FACE...
ANYWAY, I CAN'T BELIEVE ROBO-CAT HIM-SELF WAS A TIME MACHINE...
HOUTAROU
VANN
FLORB
JAFALLE
SHUT UP!!
CROWD




IT'S SO BIG!
HE'S HUGE...
AND TERRIFY-ING

THOSE BIRDS ARE BEAUTIFUL.
YOU LIKE LIONS?
WHERE ARE THE LIONS?
HOW SCARY.
THEY'RE LOOKING THIS WAY
THEY'RE COOL.

I-I AM IN THE ART CLUB.
YOU'RE PRETTY GOOD AT DRAWING.

HE'S SO COOL.
HE LOOKS SO STRONG
EAST?
...
HERE I DREW THESE FROM MEMORY.
THESE ARE THE PICTURES THE.. ALIENS SHOWED US.
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
...

WHAT DO YOU THINK THIS DIAGRAM IS?
...THE SLEEPING TOWER'S GHOST... SPACIFICA, RIGHT?
A SPIRIT CIRCLE AND...
GIVE ME A PEN AND PAPER.
UNIVERSE DIAGRAM?
SOUL...
OH, SOUL STUDIES IS THE SUBJECT FORTUNA RESEARCHED.
...IT LOOKS KIND OF LIKE THE UNIVERSE DIAGRAM WE USED IN SOUL STUDIES.
HMM... WHAT IS THIS?
IT LOOKS LIKE THIS.
...
THE FLOW OF TIME GOES ONLY ONE-WAY, SO IT'S CALLED A RIVER.
SPACE
(SPACE-TIME)
PAST
TIME
FUTURE
THIS LINE IN THE MIDDLE IS CALLED HEAVEN'S RIVER. IT'S THE MOST BASIC SPACE-TIME COORDINATE PLANE.
EVERY POINT IN SPACE IS EXPRESSED WITHIN THE LIMITED WIDTH OF THE LINE.

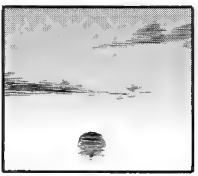
LIKE P-PARAL-LEL UNI-VERSES?
NO.
THERE'S ONLY ONE HEAVEN'S RIVER IN THE MIDDLE.
THEY EXPRESS THE FACT THAT THERE ARE WORLDS IN OTHER DIMENSIONS JUST AS LARGE AS THE MATERIAL UNI-VERSE OF HEAVEN'S RIVER.
HEAVEN'S RIVER
THESE LAYERS ABOVE AND BELOW ARE THE SPIRIT OR NON-MATERIAL WORLD.
URGH...
COUNTLESS SOULS POWER THIS MATERIAL WORLD, AND...
EACH LINE CORRESPONDS TO A SOUL.
TAP TAP
THE OTHER LINES ARE NON-MATERIAL... WORLDS OF ENERGY THAT OVERLAP PER-FECTLY WITH HEAV-EN'S RIVER.
...OH!
...? WAIT, PARALLEL UNIVERSES?
...
N-NO MORE, PLEASE.
THIS IS...
I DON'T GET IT...
I KNOW WHAT THIS DIAGRAM MEANS!

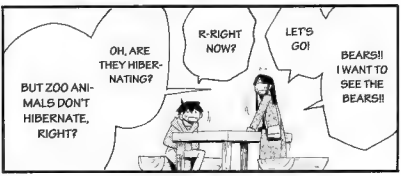
ACTUALLY, A LOT OF YOUR PAST SELVES WERE INTELLECTUALS.
FUUKO-CHAN AND LAFALLE WERE BOTH SMART, AND FORTUNA PROBABLY DREW THIS DIAGRAM.

..YOU'RE SO WEIRD.

BUT I LIKE YOU BETTER THAT WAY.
HEE HEE.
TRUE.

WELL, RIGHT NOW I'M AN IDIOT.




BUT ZOO ANIMALS DON'T HIBERNATE, RIGHT?
OH, ARE THEY HIBERNATING?
R-RIGHT NOW?
LET'S GO!
BEARS!! I WANT TO SEE THE BEARS!!

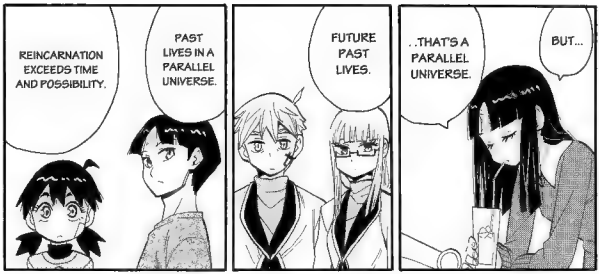
SIGN: KARAOKE
YOU SEEM TO HAVE... A LOT OF MONEY...
WHERE DID YOU GET IT?
LIS-TEN...
O-OH... OKAY.
MY TREAT.
カラオケ
LET'S GO DO KARAOKE NEXT!!
LATER.

SO ABOUT THAT WORLD...

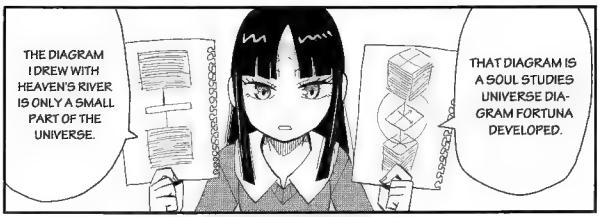
FLYING THROUGH THE SKY
ULTI-MAGICAL TWIRLY-MAGICAL MARIE
WHOA.
WHOA.
敵のマドカのコスプレ？
IS SHE COSPLAYING THE ANIME FROM THE SONG?

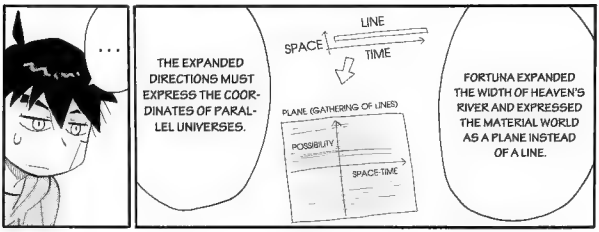
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE... ALIENS? WERE THEY ACTUALLY EVEN ALIENS?
HONESTLY, I DON'T REALLY WANT TO THINK ABOUT IT.
THE ALIENS MADE COFFEE FOR US ON A STOVE...
JUST RE-MEMBERING IT TEARS MY HEAD APART.

IT WAS THERE FOR 300 YEARS...
300年間ずっとあったって：
THAT THING WAS TOO ABSURD TO UNDER-STAND.
WAS THE FUJI ROOF A UFO AFTER ALL?

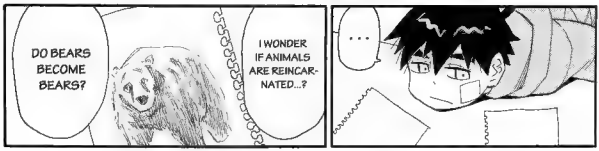

REINCARNATION EXCEEDS TIME AND POSSIBILITY.
PAST LIVES IN A PARALLEL UNIVERSE.
FUTURE PAST LIVES.
..THAT'S A PARALLEL UNIVERSE.
BUT...

..BUT FORTUNA SEEMS TO UNDER-STAND IT
IT MAY BE CRAZY...
...IT'S INSANE.


THE DIAGRAM I DREW WITH HEAVEN'S RIVER IS ONLY A SMALL PART OF THE UNIVERSE.
THAT DIAGRAM IS A SOUL STUDIES UNIVERSE DIA-GRAM FORTUNA DEVELOPED.


...
THE EXPANDED DIRECTIONS MUST EXPRESS THE COOR-DINATES OF PARAL-LEL UNIVERSES.
LINE
SPACE
TIME
PLANE (GATHERING OF LINES)
POSSIBILITY
SPACE-TIME
FORTUNA EXPANDED THE WIDTH OF HEAVEN'S RIVER AND EXPRESSED THE MATERIAL WORLD AS A PLANE INSTEAD OF A LINE.

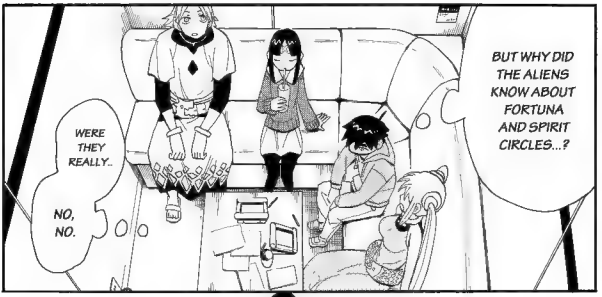
IN THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION, THEY'RE NOTHING MORE THAN DISTANCE.
THAT'S ENOUGH. I DON'T GET IT...
EVEN FLUCTUATIONS IN POSSIBILITY.
TIME.
SPACE.


DO BEARS BECOME BEARS?
I WONDER IF ANIMALS ARE REINCARNATED...?
...

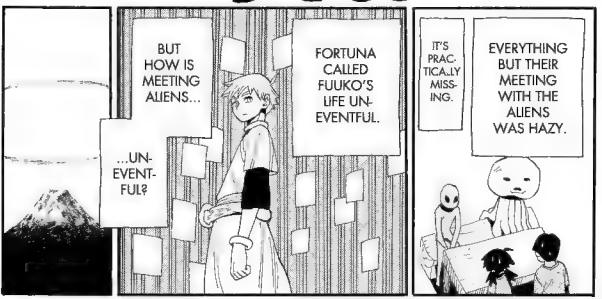
THEY'RE REBORN FROM PERSON TO PERSON SEVERAL HUNDRED TIMES AS WELL.
AFTER TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PLANTS AND THOUSANDS OF ANIMALS, SOULS ARE FINALLY REINCARNATED AS PEOPLE.
IN SOUL STUDIES, I LEARNED SOULS CHOOSE AN ORGANISM APPROPRIATE FOR THEIR EXPERIENCE AND GROWTH.

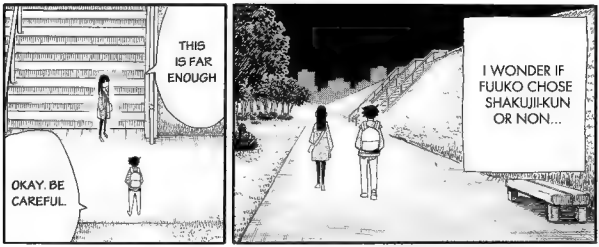
DOLPHINS, WHALES...
GODS...
THERE ARE SEVERAL VIEWS.
WHAT HAPPENS TO SOULS THAT GRADUATE FROM HUMANS?
S-SEVERAL HUNDRED
I'VE BEEN PUSHED AROUND QUITE A BIT BY ONLY SEVEN LIVES...

WHAT?
OH.
...WHAT ABOUT... ALIENS?
...ARE ACTUALLY OUR FUTURE LIVES.
AND..
...MAYBE THOSE TWO WE MET...
HA HA HA, SORRY. I WAS JUST KIDDING.
HA... HA HA HA HA HA HA. NO, NO WAY.


BUT WHY DID THE ALIENS KNOW ABOUT FORTUNA AND SPIRIT CIRCLES...?
WERE THEY REALLY..
NO, NO.

FUUKO AND SHAKUJII-KUN SEEMED TO HAVE HARDLY ANY OF THE CONNECTION OF THEIR PAST LIVES.
MORE THAN ANYTHING, THEIR MEMORIES WERE STRANGE.
THAT FUTURE LIFE WAS FULL OF MYSTERIES. EVERYTHING WAS SO DIFFERENT.

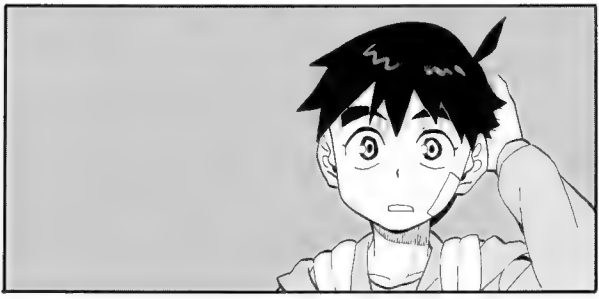

BUT HOW IS MEETING ALIENS...
...UNEVENTFUL?
FORTUNA CALLED FUUKO'S LIFE UNEVENTFUL.
IT'S PRACTICALLY MISSING.
EVERYTHING BUT THEIR MEETING WITH THE ALIENS WAS HAZY.


THIS IS FAR ENOUGH
OKAY. BE CAREFUL.
I WONDER IF FUUKO CHOSE SHAKUJII-KUN OR NON...

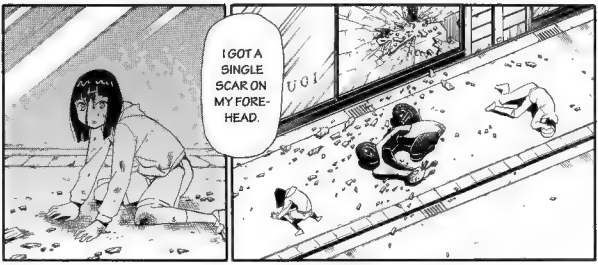
...WITH ME.
THANKS FOR SPENDING TODAY...

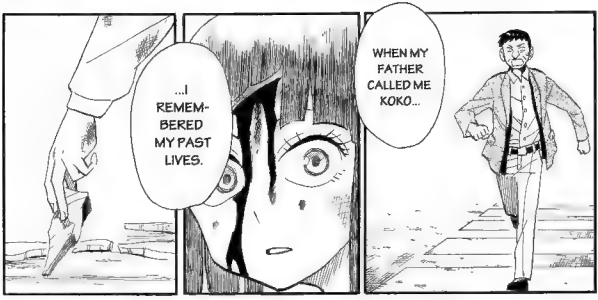
...HUH?
...I HAVE NO REGRETS
NOW...
NO. THANK YOU.
UM... NO...

...OKEYA FUUTA.
I'VE SHOWN YOU ALL THE FACES ISHIGAMI KOUKO WANTED TO SHOW...



ISHI-GAMI-SAN!!
WAIT!
HEY!
SORRY FOR BREAKING MY PROMISE TO TELL YOU THE DAY OF OUR FINAL BATTLE.
I'VE CONVEYED ISHIGAMI KOUKO'S FEELINGS TO YOU.
GOOD BYE.
...IN THE ACCIDENT.
I WITH-DREW THE SETTLEMENT I WAS PAID WHEN I WAS INJURED...
I DIDN'T TELL YOU WHY I HAD SO MUCH MONEY.
OH, I FORGOT.
IT WAS A TRAFFIC ACCIDENT.
IT WAS A COINCI-DENCE.
IT MUST MAKE YOU NEARLY REMEMBER KOKO EVERY TIME YOU LOOK IN A MIRROR.
I'LL REMOVE YOUR SCAR.
THAT SCAR...


I GOT A SINGLE SCAR ON MY FORE-HEAD.


WHEN MY FATHER CALLED ME KOKO...
...I REMEM-BERED MY PAST LIVES.

I GAVE MYSELF THE OTHER...
...CROSSING SCAR...
...TO MAKE MY MEMORY CLEARER.

...I REGAINED MY WARRIOR SELF.
THEN...
I AM EAST'S DAUGHTER, WARRIOR KOUKO.
THE NEXT TIME WE MEET, I WILL DESTROY YOUR EVIL SOUL.
FORTUNA.

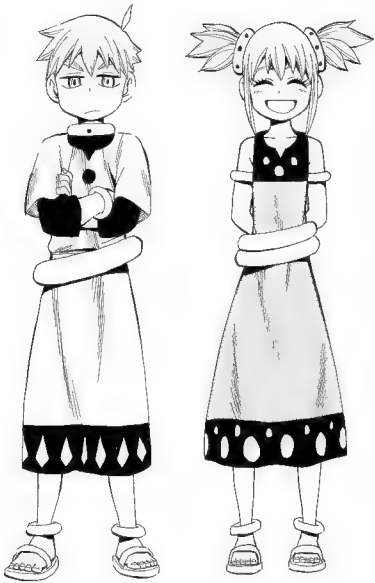
I SAW MY REST OF FOR TUNA'S.

TWO DAYS BEFORE OUR BATTLE...

AFTER THAT...

...SINCLAIR-SAN STOPPED COMING TO SCHOOL.

CIRCLE 34
FORTUNA 1



IS THE FINAL PAST LIFE THAT I MUST BEAR WITNESS TO
WHAT I'M ABOUT TO SEE
BETWEEN ME AND ISHIGAMI SAN
THE BEGINNING OF THE CONNECTION
I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU OKEYA FUUTA
HEY FORTUNA
MY STORY SHOULD ANSWER ALL YOUR QUESTIONS
I STILL HAVE A LOT OF QUESTIONS
THIS IS THE LAST TIME WE'LL MEET HERE

AND
FARE WELL
ENJOY IT
FWOOSH
LATER FOR-TUNA
I'LL SEE YOU DEAD.

THUD
ドン
THUD
ドン
FORTUNA!!
FORTUNA!
HEY!!
SHUT UP.
WHAT DO YOU WANT..
...EAST?
ギィ
CREAK
THERE YOU ARE.
I HEARD THE MASTER KICKED YOU OUT.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN THIS ABANDONED HOUSE?
YOU'RE NOT GOING BACK TO YOUR PARENTS?
ONE THING AT A TIME.

I SURPASSED THE MASTER.
ALSO, I WASN'T KICKED OUT. I LEFT.
THIS IS MY RESEARCH LAB.
I LIVE HERE NOW.
...BUT YOU'RE BETTER THAN HER, RIGHT?
I WAS GOING TO ASK THE MASTER FOR AN INTRO-DUCTION...
MAKE ME YOUR APPRENTICE, THEN!!
I'M NOT GOOD AT ANYTHING, SO I NEED TO DO SOMETHING.
EAST, YOU WANT TO STUDY SPIRITS?
...OF COURSE I'M BETTER.
...
WHAT DO YOU SEE HERE?

BEAT IT.
YOU'RE HOPELESS.
AW, COME ON.
SHOVE
A WALL?
とぼ とぼ
TRUDGE TRUDGE
BUT YOU WANTED AN APPRENTICE.
YOU NEED NATURAL TALENT TO STUDY SPIRITS.
IF HE CAN'T SEE YOU, HE'S HOPELESS.
I DO WANT AN APPRENTICE, BUT...
CALL ME MASTER...
...RUNE.
DON'T CALL ME FUU.
YOU SURE, FUU?

YOU'RE AMAZING, FUU.
MOO-STER...
MASH-TER...
I MADE YOU.
OF COURSE I'M AMAZING.
BUT I DID.
...NO, NOBODY ELSE COULD DO IT.
NOT EVEN THE MASTER COULD...
I AM A GENIUS.
EVERY-ONE ELSE IS STUPID.
NO ONE ELSE CAN DO IT.
BUT I CAN.
IT SURE IS.
THAT'S AMAZING.

THIS WORLD WITHOUT RIVALS IS BORING.
THOSE WHO DO UNDER-STAND FEAR AND ENVY ME.
FEW PEOPLE UNDER-STAND MY GENIUS.

"FORTUNA"
SHUT UP.
FUU, LET'S PLAY.
CHAPTER ONE

TASK 1: RAISE RUNE, THE MAN-MADE SPIRIT, LIKE A NORMAL HUMAN.
OH!
CATCH IT!!
OVER THERE, RUNE.
I GAVE MYSELF ASSIGN-MENTS SO I COULD LIVE IN A BORING WORLD.

...BUT RUNE CAN'T CATCH THEM YET.
I'LL HAVE TO THINK OF ANOTHER WAY...
HMM... I CAME TO A GRAVEYARD BECAUSE I WANTED A SAMPLE OF AN ADULT SPIRIT...

墓石 TOMBSTONE

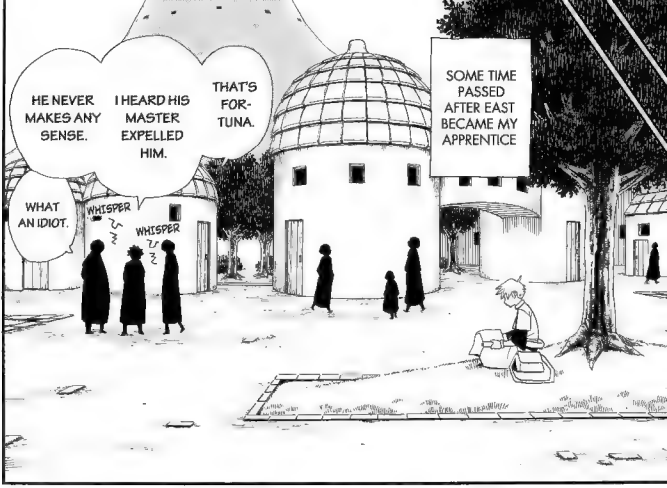
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
EAST?
WHA...
?
WHAT?
?
THIS GHOST IS ALIVE.
...SO I CAN LEARN TO SEE GHOSTS...
WHO'S THIS?
F-FOR-TUNA?
I'VE BEEN COMING TO THE GRAVE-YARD AT NIGHT...
HUH?
...OH. I GET IT.
...YOU CAN SEE RUNE?
BUT YOU COULDN'T THE OTHER DAY...
ALL RIGHT!!
WHAT?!
OKAY, EAST. I ACCEPT YOU AS MY APPRENTICE.
TASK 2: TRAIN AN APPREN-TICE.
THAT'S GREAT.
R-RUNE?
THAT'S ME.

CAN'T YOU?
CAN YOU HEAR ME?
CAN YOU SEE ME?
WHAT KIND OF TRAINING IS THIS?
IF HE HAD ANY POTENTIAL AT ALL, HE WOULD BE WORTH TRAINING.
NO, WAIT. RELAX INSTEAD.
YOU'RE EXPANDING YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS. YOU NEED TO FOCUS TO EXPAND YOUR PERCEPTION SO YOU CAN SEE JUST AS MUCH DURING THE DAY AS AT NIGHT...

...I MADE MYSELF DO IT.
...
CRASH!!
WHOA!!
BOO!!
DID YOU SEE ME?
EVEN IF HE UPSET ME, I REFUSED TO BECOME THE SORT OF MASTER WHO EXPELS HIS APPRENTICES.
FORTUNA, TEA...

...RELIEVED MY BOREDOM.

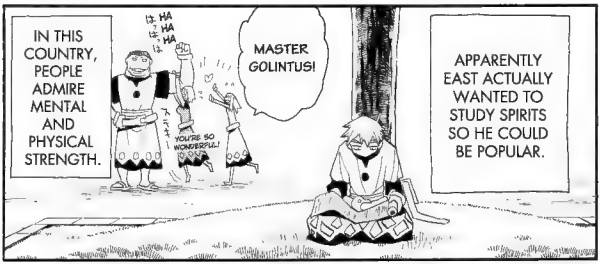
?
?
MY TWO TASKS...


SOME TIME PASSED AFTER EAST BECAME MY APPRENTICE
THAT'S FOR-TUNA.
I HEARD HIS MASTER EXPELLED HIM.
HE NEVER MAKES ANY SENSE.
WHISPER
WHISPER
WHAT AN IDIOT.

WOW.
IT'S FOR-TUNA.
HE ES-TABLISHED HIS OWN RESEARCH LAB.
LET'S GO.
THAT'S ANCIENT HISTORY...
...
GLARE

WE'RE BACK.
YOU'RE LUCKY YOU'RE SO POPULAR, FORTUNA.
WE'RE BACK.
DID YOU HEAR ALL OF RUNE'S INSTRUCTIONS?
HMPH
I DON'T CARE IF IDIOTS LIKE ME.
...
GLARE
EEEK!

AW...
WE NEED AGAS LEAVES, ROCK SALT...
GO.
KEEP GOING TO THE MARKETPLACE AND PLAZA UNTIL YOU GET EVERYTHING.
TOSS
...YOU ONLY BOUGHT HALF.
HOW'S THIS?
OF COURSE.


IN THIS COUNTRY, PEOPLE ADMIRE MENTAL AND PHYSICAL STRENGTH.
HA HA HA
YOU'RE SO WONDERFUL!
MASTER GOLINTUS!
APPARENTLY EAST ACTUALLY WANTED TO STUDY SPIRITS SO HE COULD BE POPULAR.

SO, YOU CAME TO TOWN.

I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU, FORTUNA.
...
IF ONLY HE HAD MY THICK BROWS...
HEH
..BUT HE HAS A WEAK FEMININE FACE.
NOT ONLY DOES HE HAVE NEITHER...

NOW THAT I'M INDEPENDENT, YOU'VE GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH ME.
SO, WHAT?
YEAH, YEAH, FLAMBE-SAN.
I'M A SENIOR APPREN-TICE.
SHOW SOME RESP-ECT.
...FLAMBE.
WHY, YOU...!!
I DON'T UNDER-STAND WHY THE MASTER SUM-MONED YOU...!!
WHAT DO YOU WANT?
AND YOU'RE A SYCO-PHANT.
HOW DARE YOU LOOK DOWN ON EVERY-ONE--!
YOU'RE AS IRRITATING AS EVER. .
I GOT EVERY-THING THIS TIME.
WE'RE BACK.
HURRY UP.
JUST COME.
WHY?
SHE SUM-MONED ME?

I'VE GOT BUSINESS.
HEAD HOME WITHOUT ME.
WHAT?
MASTER, I BROUGHT FORTUNA.
...HELLO...
...IT WON'T BE LONG NOW.
THE DOCTORS GAVE UP. THERE'S NO WAY TO TREAT HER.
WHISPER
FOR-TUNA...

IT WAS THE FIRST TIME I EXPERIENCED FAILURE.

I AS GOOD AS KILLED HER.

I'M A GENIUS, BUT I COULDN'T SAVE HER.

I WASN'T STRONG ENOUGH TO TREAT THE MASTER'S ILLNESS.

I COULDN'T SAVE HER.

NO.
AM I INCOMPETENT?
NO.
DID I KILL HER?
I AM A GENIUS.
IMPOSSIBLE.
IF IT'S NOT MY FAULT, IT MEANS I'M NOT A GENIUS.
I AM...
...IT WOULD HAVE SAVED ME.
IF I HAD SOMETHING TO FOCUS MY HATRED ON...
SUPPOSE SOMEBODY KILLED THE MASTER.
FOR-TUNA!!
FOR-TUNA!!
ONE SNOWY DAY...

...PUT IT BACK WHERE YOU FOUND IT.
DON'T BRING IT HERE.

I FOUND A CHILD!!
I...

WHY DID THE CHILD SURVIVE?
IT WAS HIDDEN IN THE CARRIAGE'S TRUNK.
WOLVES?
NO, LET'S RAISE IT!! WOLVES KILLED THIS CHILD'S PARENTS.

...

I'M BACK!! I CHASED THE WOLVES INTO THE MOUNTAINS, JUST LIKE YOU ASKED.
THANK YOU.

YAAAH!
FLINCH
IF RUNE HADN'T CHASED OFF THE WOLVES...
..THEY MAY HAVE EATEN THIS CHILD, TOO.
AND ME.

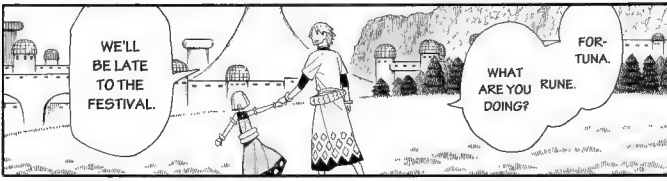
YOU WOULD HAVE SAVED THE CHILD.
NO.
WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE?
HOW DARE YOU USE RUNE.
NOTHING.
I'LL ASK THE RANCHERS TO THE WEST FOR HELP.
..HELPING YOU RAISE THAT CHILD.
I'M NOT...
NOT REI.
THERE'S SOMETHING EMBROIDERED. COULD THIS BE IT?
REI?
WHAT'S ITS NAME?
SAGE OF SNOW, KOKO.
NAME HER KOKO.
REI IS THE GODDESS OF WAR.

SHE'S CRYING. GO TO THE RANCH.
ISN'T THAT...
HUH? IS REI THE GODDESS OF WAR?
WAH...
WAAAH!
...YOU CAN'T JUST CHANGE HER NAME...
BUT...
BUT I DID NOTHING.
EAST WORE HIMSELF OUT CARING FOR THE CHILD.
SHE SHOWED POTENTIAL.
WHEN SHE GREW OLDER, I TRIED TEACHING HER ABOUT SPIRITS.
RUNE OFTEN PLAYED WITH KOKO.
KOKO SEEMED TO BE ABLE TO SEE RUNE, AND SHE ADORED HER.

...BUT SHE NEVER THOUGHT TO CALL HIM FATHER.
FA-THER.
?
EAST.
MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE WE CALLED HIM EAST...
EAST!!
SHE USED NO HONORIFICS WITH HER ADOPTIVE FATHER.
I THOUGHT I COULD HAVE AT LEAST HELPED WITH THAT.
EAST!!
THE WOUNDS I RECEIVED WHEN I COULDN'T SAVE MY MASTER.
ONE DAY...
...I REALIZED MY WOUNDS HAD HEALED

I KNEW.
TIME, AND THE OTHERS, HAD HEALED ME.

BEING WITH THEM WAS UNBELIEVABLY TRANQUIL.
GRATITUDE AND RE-PENTANCE NATURALLY WELLED UP INSIDE ME.


WE'LL BE LATE TO THE FESTIVAL.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
FOR-TUNA.
RUNE.

LET'S GO, MASTER.
COM-ING!
YEAH.
I'M COM-ING.

I FELT A SENSE OF FULFILL-MENT.
BOREDOM WAS QUIET...
...AND COM-FORT-ABLE.
FOR-TUNA!!
IT FILLED ME...

IT'S EAST...!!
WHAT'S WRONG, KOKO?

HE JUST SUDDENLY COLLAPSED..
NO.
DID HE EAT SOME-THING BAD?

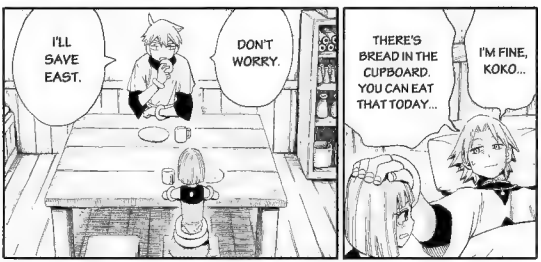
THESE MARKS...

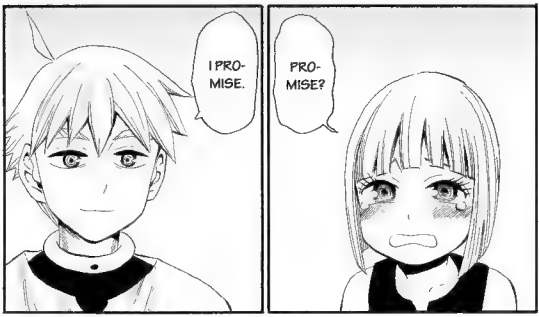
...AND SPILLED
IT'S THE SAME AS THE MASTER'S ILLNESS.
...OVER FLOWED

CIRCLE 35
FORTUNA 2

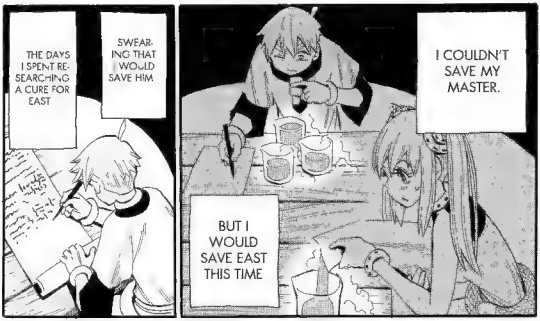
ZZSSSHH

ARE YOU OKAY, EAST?
EAST...


I'LL SAVE EAST.
DON'T WORRY.
THERE'S BREAD IN THE CUPBOARD. YOU CAN EAT THAT TODAY...
I'M FINE, KOKO...

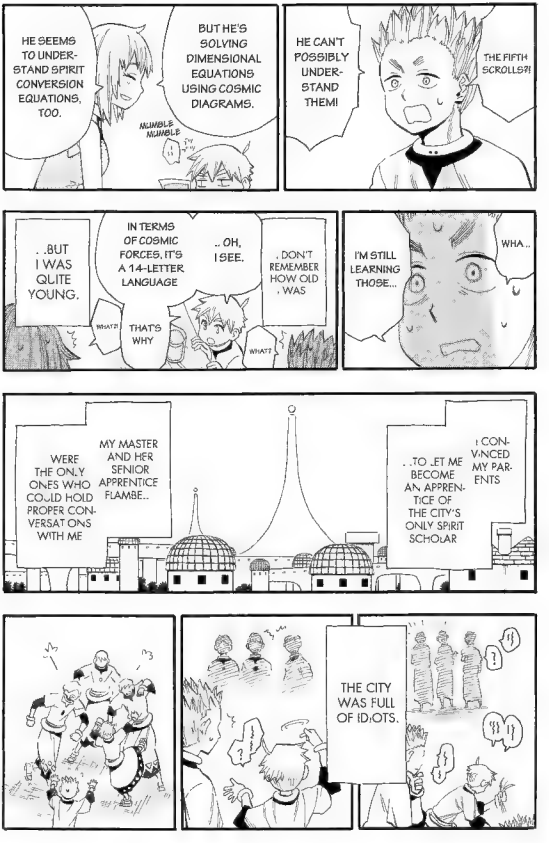

I PRO-
MISE.
PRO-
MISE?

.STRUCK WITH THE SAME ILL NESS MY MASTER HAD
THE DAY OF THE FES-TIVAL, EAST COLLAPSED. .


THE DAYS I SPENT RE-SEARCHING A CURE FOR EAST
SWEAR-ING THAT I WOULD SAVE HIM
I COULDN'T SAVE MY MASTER.
BUT I WOULD SAVE EAST THIS TIME

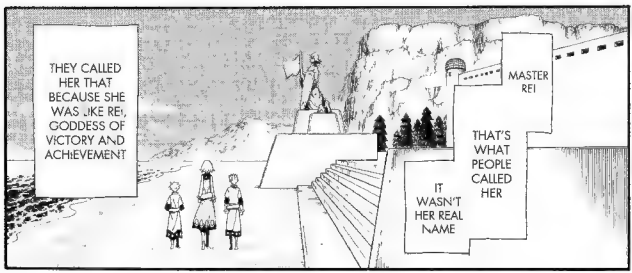
...WERE TRULY FULFILLING.
IT REMINDS ME OF MY PAST.
RESEARCH IS SO FUN.
BEAU-TIFUL, ISN'T IT?
THIS IS SPIRIT MAT-TER.
WHEN I STUDIED UNDER MY MASTER.
IF YOU GATHER ENOUGH OF IT, CAN YOU MAKE A SPIRIT, MAS-TER?

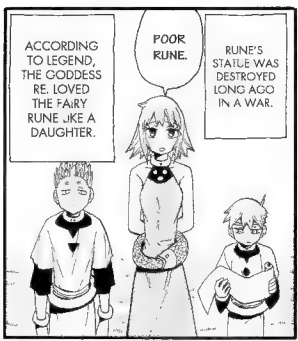
HALF? SPIRIT MATERIAL IS DIFFERENT FROM SPIRITS BECAUSE OF ITS CONSCIOUSNESS? INTERMEDIARY MATTER OR SPECIAL STIMULUS OR..
MUMBLE MUMBLE
YOU'RE HALF RIGHT.
WHAT?
YOU KNOW UP TO SEVEN?
+MMM.. A COMBINATION OF THE SEVEN LEVELS..?
THANKS FOR GOING OUT TO THE STORE-HOUSE, FLAMBE.
BUT I DON'T THINK THREE IS ENOUGH FOR FORTUNA.
THE FIFTH SCROLLS ARE ON THE SHELF. COULD YOU GO GET THEM?
AUNT. I MEAN, MASTER, I BROUGHT THE THIRD SCROLLS.
BUT ISN'T IT TOO SOON?


HE SEEMS TO UNDERSTAND SPIRIT CONVERSION EQUATIONS, TOO.
BUT HE'S SOLVING DIMENSIONAL EQUATIONS USING COSMIC DIAGRAMS.
MUMBLE MUMBLE
HE CAN'T POSSIBLY UNDERSTAND THEM!
THE FIFTH SCROLL?!
..BUT I WAS QUITE YOUNG.
WHAT?!
IN TERMS OF COSMIC FORCES, IT'S A 14-LETTER LANGUAGE
THAT'S WHY
.. OH, I SEE.
WHAT?
, DON'T REMEMBER HOW OLD , WAS
I'M STILL LEARNING THOSE...
WHA..
WERE THE ONLY ONES WHO COULD HOLD PROPER CONVERSATIONS WITH ME
MY MASTER AND HER SENIOR APPRENTICE FLAMBE..
. .TO .ET ME BECOME AN APPRENTICE OF THE CITY'S ONLY SPIRIT SCHOLAR
I CONVINCED MY PARENTS
THE CITY WAS FULL OF IDIOTS.

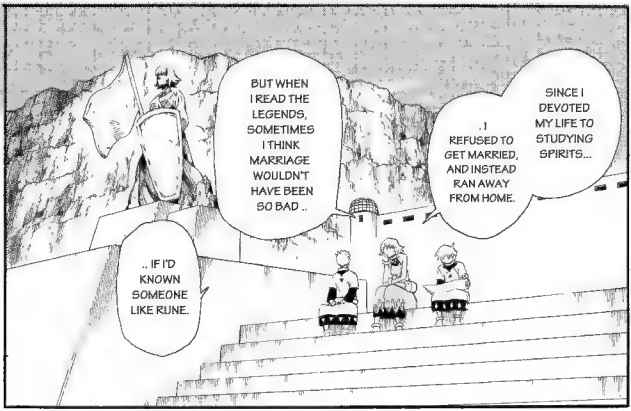
..AFTER A YEAR, I STOPPED BEING ABLE TO TALK TO FLAMBE.
BUT.
LIKE THE OTHERS..
. HE STARTED TO AVOID ME
MY MASTER WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO UNDER-STOOD ME.

. .WAS ONLY ONE WHO WAS "HUMAN" TO ME.
MY MASTER .

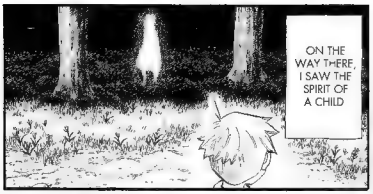

THEY CALLED HER THAT BECAUSE SHE WAS LIKE REI, GODDESS OF VICTORY AND ACHIEVEMENT
MASTER REI
THAT'S WHAT PEOPLE CALLED HER
IT WASN'T HER REAL NAME

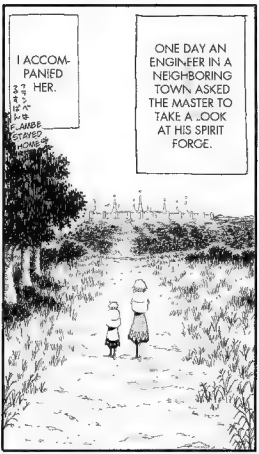

ACCORDING TO LEGEND, THE GODDESS RE. LOVED THE FAIRY RUNE LIKE A DAUGHTER.
POOR RUNE.
RUNE'S STATUE WAS DESTROYED LONG AGO IN A WAR.

BESIDE REI ONCE STOOD A STATUE OF HER ATTENDANT.
THE FAIRY RUNE

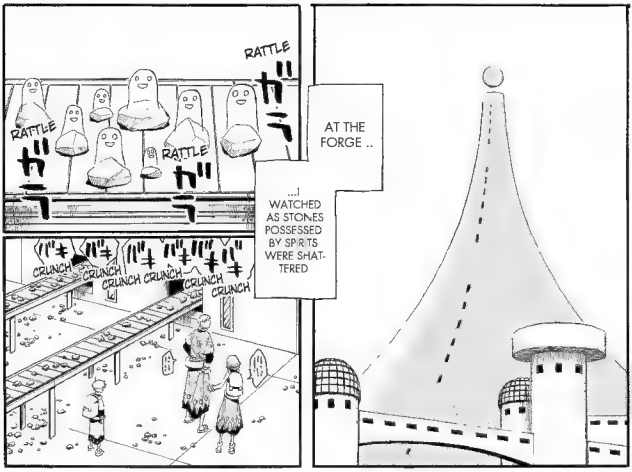

BUT WHEN I READ THE LEGENDS, SOMETIMES I THINK MARRIAGE WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN SO BAD ..
.. IF I'D KNOWN SOMEONE LIKE RUNE.
. I REFUSED TO GET MARRIED, AND INSTEAD RAN AWAY FROM HOME.
SINCE I DEVOTED MY LIFE TO STUDYING SPIRITS...

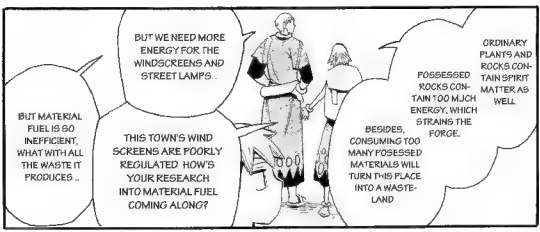
...
?
...WHY AM I TELLING THIS TO CHILDREN?

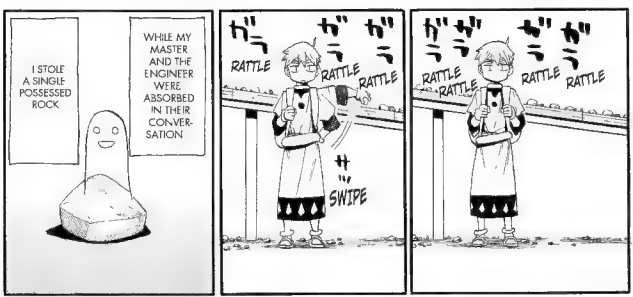

ON THE WAY THERE, I SAW THE SPIRIT OF A CHILD


I ACCOMPANIED HER.
ONE DAY AN ENGINEER IN A NEIGHBORING TOWN ASKED THE MASTER TO TAKE A LOOK AT HIS SPIRIT FORCE.
HE ALONE STAYED HOME.

DON'T STARE.
HEY.

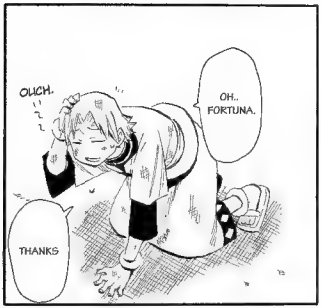

RATTLE
RATTLE
RATTLE
AT THE FORGE ..
...I WATCHED AS STONES POSSESSED BY SPIRITS WERE SHATTERED
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
CRUNCH

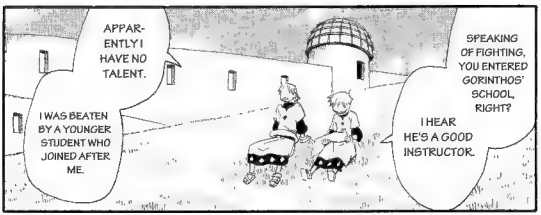

BUT MATERIAL FUEL IS SO INEFFICIENT, WHAT WITH ALL THE WASTE IT PRODUCES ..
BUT WE NEED MORE ENERGY FOR THE WINDSCREENS AND STREET LAMPS .
THIS TOWN'S WIND SCREENS ARE POORLY REGULATED. HOW'S YOUR RESEARCH INTO MATERIAL FUEL COMING ALONG?
BESIDES, CONSUMING TOO MANY POSESSED MATERIALS WILL TURN THIS PLACE INTO A WASTE-LAND
POSSESSED ROCKS CONTAIN TOO MUCH ENERGY, WHICH STRAINS THE FORGE.
ORDINARY PLANTS AND ROCKS CONTAIN SPIRIT MATTER AS WELL


I STOLE A SINGLE POSSESSED ROCK
WHILE MY MASTER AND THE ENGINEER WERE ABSORBED IN THEIR CONVERSATION
RATTLE
RATTLE
RATTLE
SWIPE
RATTLE
RATTLE
RATTLE
RATTLE

SO LAME. INCOMPETENT EAST
YOU'RE SO WEAK, EAST.
HAHAHA
CAN'T DO ANYTHING EAST.
...AND THROW THEM INTO THE FORGE WHILE THEY'RE SLEEPING.
IT WILL RESOLVE THE CITY'S SOCIAL AND ENERGY PROBLEMS AT THE SAME TIME.
ANYWAY, THERE'S A NEW PLAN IN THE WORKS TO TAKE MEAN BULLIES LIKE YOU...
HUH?
FOR-TUNAI
I HEARD THE SOUL FORGE DOESN'T HAVE ENOUGH FUEL.
STEP STEP
LET'S SEE... WHAT ARE YOU NAMES AGAIN?
I'M HELPING MY MASTER MAKE A LIST OF NAUGHTY KIDS TO SEND TO THE ENGINEERS.
GO AWAY.
L-LIAR!!
SHOVE
Y-YOU THINK HE'S SERIOUS?
WH-WHAT A CREEP.
MORON!! OF COURSE NOT...
LET'S GO.

THAT FIGHT NEARLY BROKE ME.
YOU'RE TALL. YOU SHOULD TRY WORKING OUT.


OUCH.
OH.. FORTUNA.
THANKS

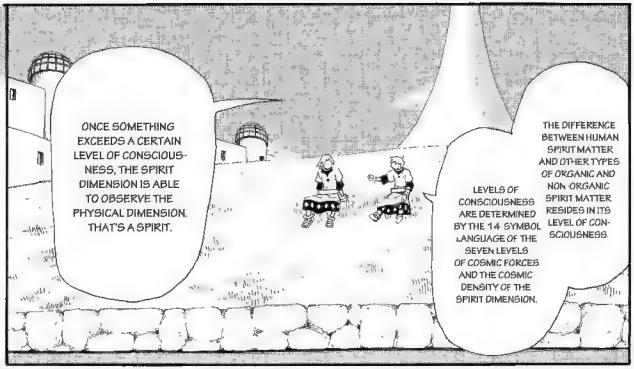

APPARENTLY I HAVE NO TALENT.
I WAS BEATEN BY A YOUNGER STUDENT WHO JOINED AFTER ME.
SPEAKING OF FIGHTING, YOU ENTERED GORINTHOS' SCHOOL, RIGHT?
I HEAR HE'S A GOOD INSTRUCTOR.

I'M CONDUCTING MY OWN RESEARCH NOW
I'VE FINISHED READING MOST OF MY MASTER'S WRITINGS
RUMMAGE

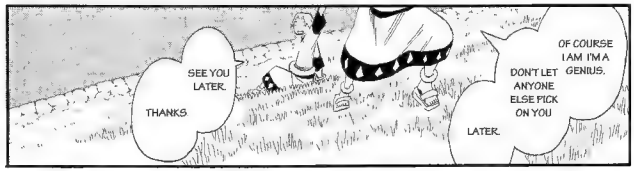
DON'T MAKE THAT FACE.
HOW HAVE YOU BEEN LATELY?
LAME!
HA HA HA.

WHAT IS THAT? A ROCK?
A SPIRIT.
I'M STUDYING THE FUSION RATE OF PHYSICAL AND SPIRIT MATTER.

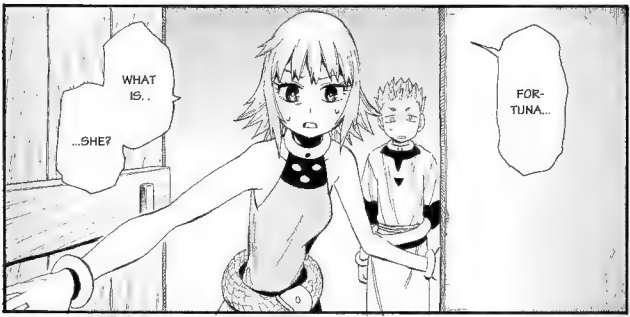
ON THIS


ONCE SOMETHING EXCEEDS A CERTAIN LEVEL OF CONSCIOUSNESS, THE SPIRIT DIMENSION IS ABLE TO OBSERVE THE PHYSICAL DIMENSION. THAT'S A SPIRIT.
LEVELS OF CONSCIOUSNESS ARE DETERMINED BY THE 14 SYMBOL LANGUAGE OF THE SEVEN LEVELS OF COSMIC FORCES AND THE COSMIC DENSITY OF THE SPIRIT DIMENSION.
THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HUMAN SPIRIT MATTER AND OTHER TYPES OF ORGANIC AND NON-ORGANIC SPIRIT MATTER RESIDES IN ITS LEVEL OF CONSCIOUSNESS

YOU'RE AMAZING.
NOT THAT YOU'D UNDERSTAND.
GASP
IN THE SPIRIT DIMENSION, THE WORLD ITSELF IS A SINGLE MASSIVE CONSCIOUSNESS THAT...


SEE YOU LATER.
THANKS.
OF COURSE I AM. I'M A GENIUS.
DON'T LET ANYONE ELSE PICK ON YOU
LATER.

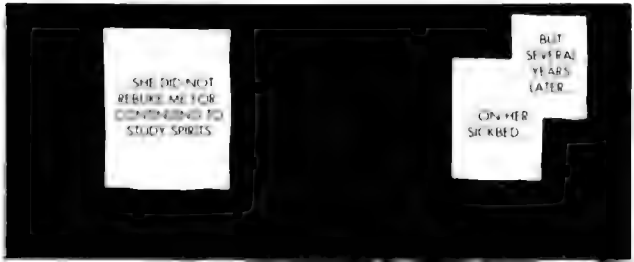
I COULD DO IT.
BECAUSE I'M A GENIUS
THAT'S RIGHT. I AM AMAZING
BECAUSE I'M A GENIUS


WHAT IS. .
...SHE?
FOR-TUNA...

FOR-TUNA!!
I'M NOT SURPRISED MASTER.
YOU KNEW INSTANTLY SHE'S NOT AN ORDINARY SPIRIT.
I'VE GIVEN HER A PSEUDO-SOUL BY FORMING A CONSCIOUSNESS OUT OF THE SPIRIT DIMENSION THROUGH MY SOUL.
ARTIFICIAL.
!!
I MADE HER FROM THE SPIRIT OF A CHILD AND THE RECONSTRUCTED SPIRIT MATTER OF THE SPIRITS FOUND IN PLANTS AND MINERALS
SHE'S AN ARTIFICIAL SPIRIT.
I THOUGHT THAT RUNE SHOULD STAND BESIDE HER GODDESS REI.
RUNE.
I NAMED HER AFTER THE LEGENDARY FAIRY.
...I'M EXPELLING YOU.
RUNE?
HOW DID YOU COME UP WITH THE STRUCTURAL FORMULA?

YOU'RE EXPELLING ME?!
WHY, MASTER?!
FOR-TUNA!!
EX-PEL?
FOR-FOR... FUU...?
A TABOO THAT SHAKES THE DEFINITIONS AND DIGNITY OF HUMANKIND... AND HUMANITY.
...BECAUSE RESEARCHING HUMANOID ARTIFICIAL SPIRITS IS HERESY.
YOU MUSTN'T CONTINUE STUDYING SPIRITS.
THEY SAY SPIRIT SCHOLARS WHO FOLLOW THAT PATH EVENTUALLY BECOME HEART-LESS MADMEN
DID YOU NOT HAVE ANY DOUBTS OR HESITATION ABOUT TOYING WITH A HUMAN SOUL?
THE IDEA ITSELF IS DANGER-OUS.
MOST OF THEM DO TURN TO CRUEL METHODS IN THEIR RESEARCH.
HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT WITH NO EXAMPLES OF SUCCESS?!
ISN'T THAT JUST THE JEALOUSY OF THE INCOM-PETENT AND ORDINARY--
W-WAIT A MINUTE!!

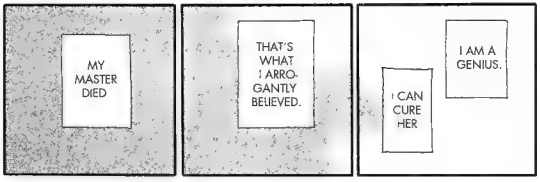
I RECOMMEND YOU FIND WORK YOU CAN DO WITH YOUR HANDS
LEARNING IS UNNECESSARY FOR YOU
CREAK
I'LL SEND YOU YOUR THINGS LATER
GO HOME TO YOUR PARENTS
I CAN'T ALLOW AN ARTIFICIAL SPIRIT TO CROSS THE THRESHOLD OF A SPIRIT SCHOLAR'S LAB

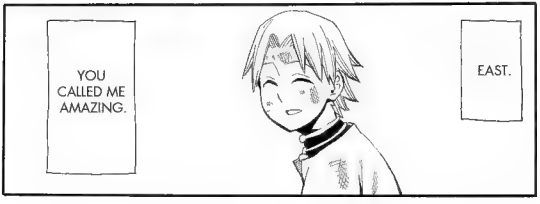

SHE DID NOT REBUKE ME FOR CONTINUING TO STUDY SPIRITS
BUT SEVERAL YEARS LATER
ON HER SICKBED

. SO I COULDN'T TELL HER I DIDN'T.
THAT WAS ALL.
SHE NEVER ASKED IF I RESENTED HER...

I'M GLAD YOU LOOK WELL.
IT'S BEEN A WHILE.
I'M SORRY. I JUST WANTED TO SEE YOUR FACE.

I THOUGHT I COULD TELL HER ONCE I CURED HER .
. AND SO REMAINED SILENT.
I FELT LIKE I HAD MANY OTHER THINGS TO TELL HER, BUT I FORGOT THEM.


MY MASTER DIED
THAT'S WHAT I ARROGANTLY BELIEVED.
I CAN CURE HER
I AM A GENIUS.


YOU CALLED ME AMAZING.
EAST.

KOKO
I HAVEN'T SHOWN YOU MUCH UNTIL NOW
. BUT I'LL SHOW YOU JUST HOW AMAZING I AM
RIGHT, RUNE?
THAT'S RIGHT. I AM AMAZING. I'M A GENIUS.
I JUST DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH TIME BEFORE.
THIS TIME I CAN REACH IT
THIS TIME...
I *WILL* SAVE EAST
THIS TIME I WILL PROVE I CAN REACH THE TRUTHS OF THIS WORLD.
I'M DOING GREAT.
AMAZING! MY BRAIN REACHES BEYOND THE CLOUDS–NO, THE STARS–NO, EVEN BEYOND THAT!!
AFTER ALL, LOOK AT HOW FUN THIS IS.

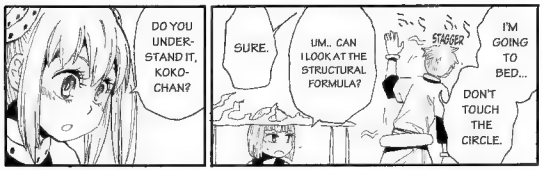
I SEE IT.
よ〜〜
HEY!
どっ
ぱぁん
SPLASH
あんたが大将よ
YOU'RE THE BOSS!

I UNDER-
STAND THE
UNIVERSE.
BOOM
どばぁ
POP
ぽかっ
GENIUS
天才
はははははははははははは
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

AN UNCLASSIFIED AND ALMIGHTY SPIRIT MATTER.
A DIMENSIONAL RING OF INTERFERENCE.
I CALL IT THE *SPIRIT CIRCLE.*

WHAT IS THIS? IT'S NOT... MEDICINE?
HOW ARE YOU GOING TO CURE EAST WITH THIS...?

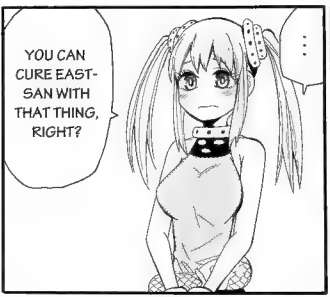
I KNOW YOU'LL MAKE A GOOD SPIRIT SCHOLAR.
THERE'S A LIBRARY IN THE WESTERN CITY. THERE ARE MANY THINGS I WANT TO SHOW YOU.
...
I KNOW! ONCE EAST IS BETTER, WE'LL GO ON A TRIP TOGETHER.
DON'T WORRY. IT'S OKAY.


DO YOU UNDER-STAND IT, KOKO-CHAN?
SURE.
UM.. CAN I LOOK AT THE STRUCTURAL FORMULA?
STAGGER
I'M GOING TO BED...
DON'T TOUCH THE CIRCLE.

...SCARES ME.
IT...
NO, BUT...

CIRCLE 36
FORTUNA 3

I'M GOING TO THE NEXT TOWN OVER TO GET ENERGY.
LOOK AFTER KOKO AND EAST.
I SEE. ENERGY, HUH...

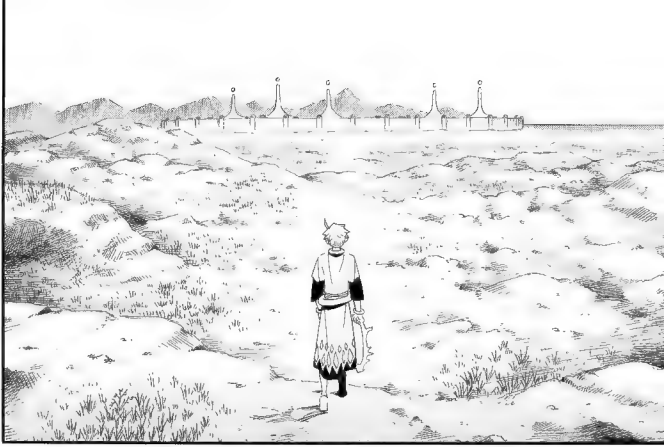

YOU CAN CURE EAST-SAN WITH THAT THING, RIGHT?
...

YEAH. IT TAKES A LOT OF ENERGY TO USE THIS.

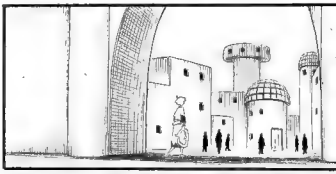
...SEEMED PRETTY ANXIOUS...
. WHILE LOOKING AT ITS STRUCTURAL DIAGRAMS.

STRICTLY SPEAKING, IT'S VERY SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT FROM CURING HIM, BUT... WHAT'S WRONG?
YESTERDAY KOKO-CHAN...

PACK? WHY?
WHEN KOKO WAKES UP, TELL HER TO PACK HER THINGS.
I WILL NOT FAIL.
ITS DESIGN IS PERFECT.
WE'RE GOING ON A TRIP.
THE FOUR OF US.
I'M SO EXCITED!!
OH, BOY!!

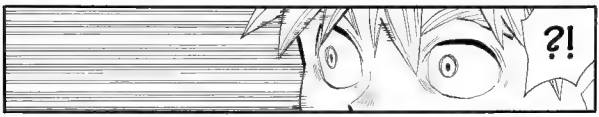


THE AREA AROUND THE CITY'S A WASTE-LAND.
THEY'VE BEEN HAR-VESTING TOO MUCH SPIRIT MATTER.
THE MASTER WARNED THEM...



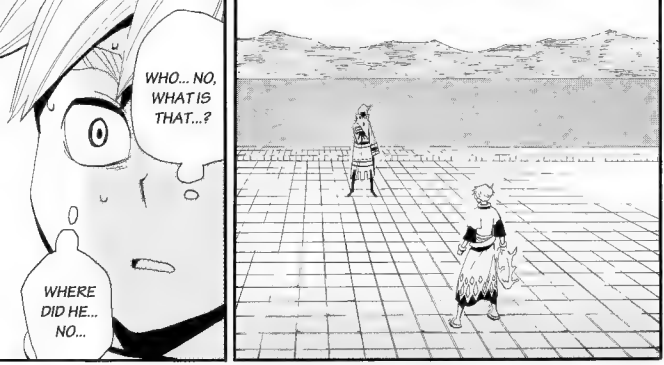
KOKO-CHAN SEEMED PRETTY ANXIOUS...
...CARE ABOUT THAT?
DAMN IT. WHY SHOULD I...
I...
MAS-TER...
BUT I'M A GENIUS.
IT WILL WORK.

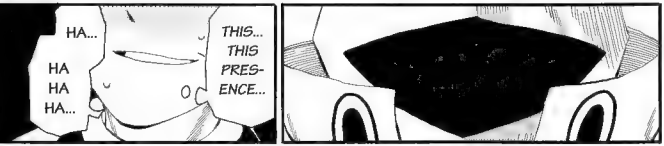
NYOOOM


?!

GIVE ME THE RING.
YOU ARE NOT READY FOR IT YET.

I AM SPACI-FICA.

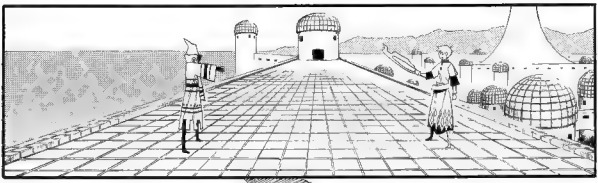

WHO... NO, WHAT IS THAT...?
WHERE DID HE... NO...


HA... HA HA HA...
THIS... THIS PRES-ENCE...

I'VE BEEN ACKNOWL-EDGED BY THE STAR SPIRITS!!
IMPOS-SIBLE!!
THIS IS AMAZ-ING!!

YES!!
NOW I KNOW THIS THING WORKS!!

IF A BEING AS GREAT AS YOURSELF IS CAPABLE OF SUCH A TASK, THAT IS!!
IF YOU WANT IT, COME AND GET IT, HIGHER BEING!!
YOU'RE NOT READY FOR
GIVE ME THE RING.



IT HAS THE POWER TO DESTROY YOU.
FWISH
BE CAREFUL HOW YOU USE IT.

YOU'VE RESTORED MY CONFIDENCE.
THANK YOU.

THIS IS HOW I'LL SAVE EAST.
I'LL DO IT.
FWOOM
FWOOM
FWOOM
OPPOSING DIMENSIONS, EXPAND.
I'LL WIPE AWAY MY FAILURE TO SAVE MY MASTER...
FWOOM
...AND OVERCOME "DEATH!!"
CAPTURE SPIRIT MATTER!!

PSHOOM
ボ
FWOOM
ボ
FWOOM
ボ
FWOOM
ボ
FWOOM
ボ
FWOOM
ボ
FWOOM
ボ
FWOOM
(Ay)

ENERGY SUCCESSFULLY ACQUIRED!!
SEVENTH SPIRIT LEVEL FIRE, IGNITE!!
I'LL HEAD WEST AND COLLECT ENERGY FROM THE OTHER SPIRIT FORGES.
HEY!! THE INSTRUMENTS ARE ACTING UP!
MURMUR
MURMUR
WHAT? NO...
HEY, DID YOU SEE A FLASH OF LIGHT?
MURMUR
MURMUR
MURMUR
BUT THIS ISN'T ENOUGH ENERGY.
EVEN THE RESERVES?!
WE'RE NEARLY OUT OF ENERGY!!
HURRY, HURRY...
ALL THE PRESSURE IN THE SPIRIT FORGE SUDDENLY VANISHED!!
WHAT'S WRONG?!
NOW THAT THEY'RE UNBALANCED, THE OTHER FORGES COULD EXPLODE!!
SORRY.
OH, NO!!
THE SPIRIT FORGES IN THE CITY SUPPORT EACH OTHER!

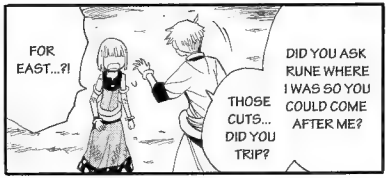
FWOOM
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
HEY, AREN'T YOU FORTUNA FROM THE NEIGHBORING CITY?
TURN
NO.
THE THIRD FORGE JUST LOST ALL PRESSURE, TOO...
SNEAK
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "TOO"?!
THIS ONE, TOO?! WHAT'S GOING ON?!
WHAT WAS THAT?! ALL THE SPIRIT FORGE'S PRESSURE...
WORD TRAVELED FAST.
LIKE THIS.
FORTUNA?! I'VE HEARD THE NAME, BUT WHAT DOES HE LOOK LIKE?
I HEARD THE NEIGHBORING TOWN'S SPIRIT SCHOLAR NAMED FORTUNA WAS SEEN RUNNING FROM THE THIRD TOWER RIGHT AFTER THE INCIDENT...
HAS ANYONE SEEN ANY SUSPICIOUS PEOPLE AROUND?!
IT'S GOING TO EXPLODE!!
KEEEEE
FORGE FOUR IS GLOWING!!

BOOM
FORGE FOUR EXPLODED!!
I NEED TO GET HOME...
FIVE IS GETTING THERE, TOO!
RUN!
FIVE IS FULL! THE CITY WILL TURN INTO A SEA OF FIRE!!
GET TO THE OCEAN!! TO THE BOATS...
ROAR

THAT'S QUITE A SIGHT...
...
HUFF HUFF HUFF...
NO...
OH, NO...
SLUMP
I'M TOO LATE...
I...
KOKO...
FOR-TUNA...
WHY...
WHY DID YOU DO THIS?!

TO SAVE EAST.
WHY? WELL...

HOW MANY SPIRIT FORGES...
THE CITY... IT'S...


FOR EAST...?!
THOSE CUTS... DID YOU TRIP?
DID YOU ASK RUNE WHERE I WAS SO YOU COULD COME AFTER ME?

HOW MANY PEOPLE DIED TO--

NOT BAD.
DID YOU FIGURE OUT WHAT I WAS DOING FROM THE DIA-GRAMS?

WHAT..

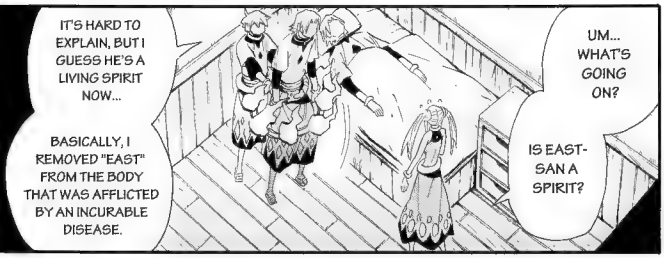
IN A FEW YEARS, WE CAN GATHER THE REMAIN-ING SPIRIT MATTER.
WHO KNOWS? BUT PROB-ABLY A LOT.

WHAT'S WRONG? I'LL LEAVE YOU BEHIND.
STEP
COME QUICKLY. LET'S GET BACK TO EAST.
KOKO?

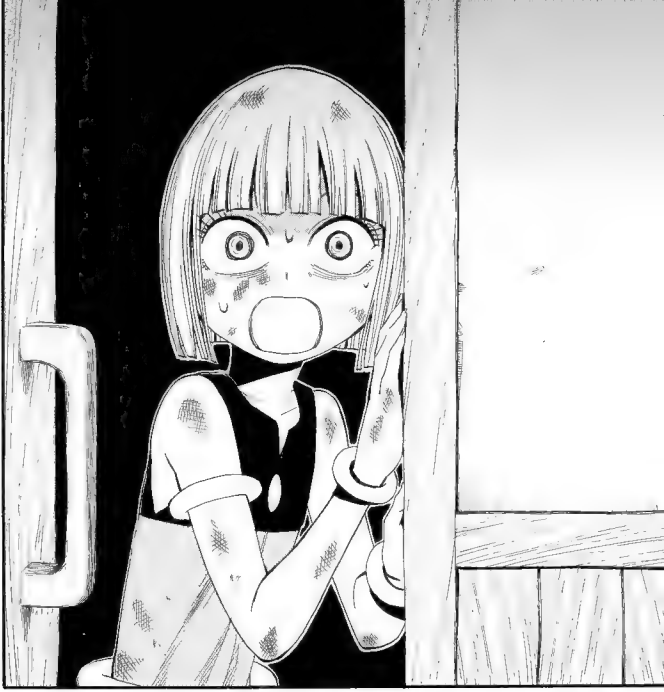
I'M GOING ON AHEAD.
DON'T TRIP AND FALL ON YOUR WAY HOME.
ARE YOU CAPTI-VATED BY IT?
IT IS A MAG-NIFICENT SIGHT.
...
...
CRACKLE
バチッ
CRACKLE
バチバチ
CRACKLE
バチッ
CRACKLE
バチバチ
CRACKLE
I'M BACK...

CRACKLE
CRACKLE
CRACKLE
CRACKLE

FOR-TUNA...?
WHAT IS... WHAT AM I...?
I CON-VERTED YOUR SPIRIT INTO LIGHT.
YOUR SPIRIT FORM SHOULD BE ABLE TO RETAIN THE SAME LEVEL OF MENTAL CLARITY AS YOUR PHYSICAL BODY.

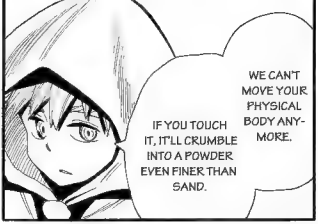

UM... WHAT'S GOING ON?
IS EAST-SAN A SPIRIT?
IT'S HARD TO EXPLAIN, BUT I GUESS HE'S A LIVING SPIRIT NOW...
BASICALLY, I REMOVED "EAST" FROM THE BODY THAT WAS AFFLICTED BY AN INCURABLE DISEASE.

WELL?! WHAT DO YOU THINK OF MY IDEA...
...NOT TO CURE THE DISEASE?!

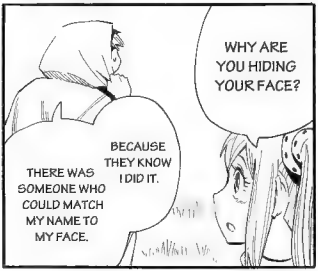


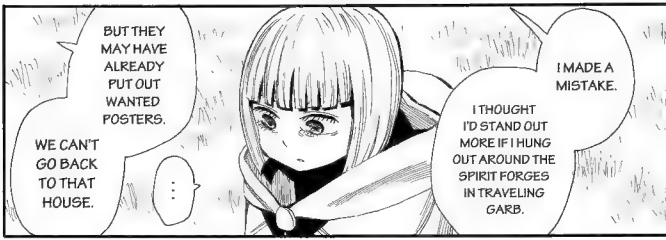
I'M... A SPIRIT...

I SEE.
YOU REALLY ARE AMAZ-ING...
...FOR-TUNA.
OF COURSE I AM.
YOU'RE BACK, KOKO?
PACK YOUR THINGS.
WE'RE LEAVING NOW.
KOKO...
KOKO-CHAN...
PLINK
EAST, HOLD ONTO THAT CIRCLE. YOU AND IT ARE A SET NOW.
I'M GOING TO PACK.
COME ON, KOKO.
HEY, KOKO?
FINE. I'LL PACK YOUR THINGS FOR YOU.

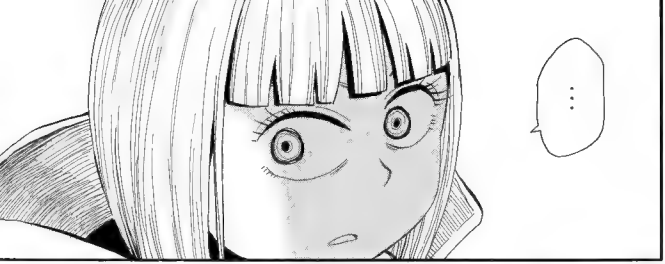

WE CAN'T MOVE YOUR PHYSICAL BODY ANY-MORE.
IF YOU TOUCH IT, IT'LL CRUMBLE INTO A POWDER EVEN FINER THAN SAND.

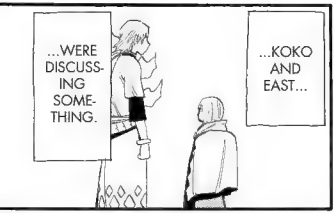
WHERE ARE WE GOING?
AND WE LEFT MY BODY ON THE BED...
WE'RE HEADING TO THE WESTERN CAPITAL WHERE THERE'S A MAJOR LIBRARY.


WHY ARE YOU HIDING YOUR FACE?
BECAUSE THEY KNOW I DID IT.
THERE WAS SOMEONE WHO COULD MATCH MY NAME TO MY FACE.


I MADE A MISTAKE.
I THOUGHT I'D STAND OUT MORE IF I HUNG OUT AROUND THE SPIRIT FORGES IN TRAVELING GARB.
BUT THEY MAY HAVE ALREADY PUT OUT WANTED POSTERS.
WE CAN'T GO BACK TO THAT HOUSE.
...

BUT ALL FOUR OF US CAN WALK AGAIN.
EVERY-THING'S FINE.


...


...WERE DISCUSSING SOMETHING.
...KOKO AND EAST...

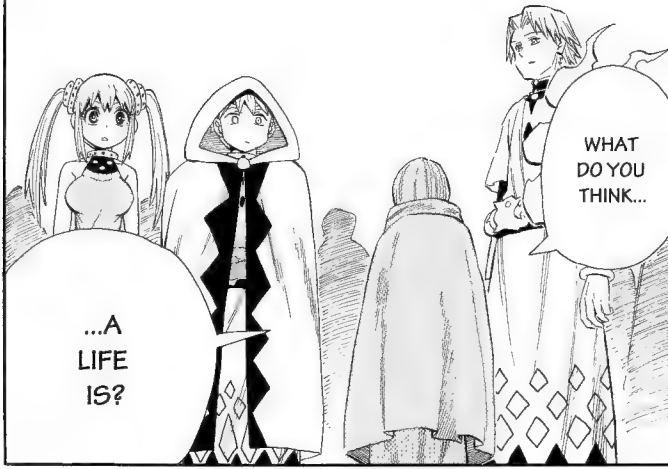
WE ARRIVED IN THE PORT TOWN
WHILE I ARRANGED TRANSPORTATION TO THE WESTERN CAPITAL...

WHEN I BROUGHT THEM THEIR SHIP TICKETS...
.KOKO SPOKE TO ME FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE WE LEFT THE HOUSE.
FOR-TUNA...

...

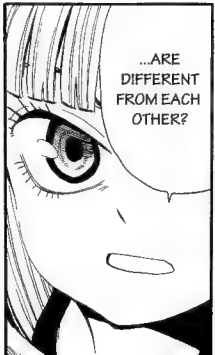
I OVERHEARD SOME PEOPLE WALKING BY.
THAT TOWN'S SPIRIT FORGE EXPLOSION RESULTED IN TWENTY THOUSAND CASUALTIES.
HUH.
I DIDN'T UNDER-STAND. . .
...WHY SHE SAID IT.
...
FOR-TUNA, WHAT...
BUT THIS CONVER-SATION...
...SET OUR DESTI-NIES...
WHAT DO YOU THINK A LIFE IS?
...DOWN DIFFERENT PATHS.

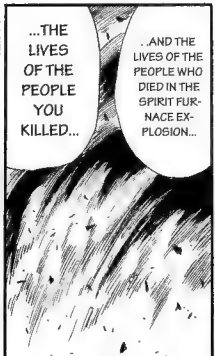
CIRCLE 37
FORTUNA 4


WHAT DO YOU THINK...
...A LIFE IS?

FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE...
...

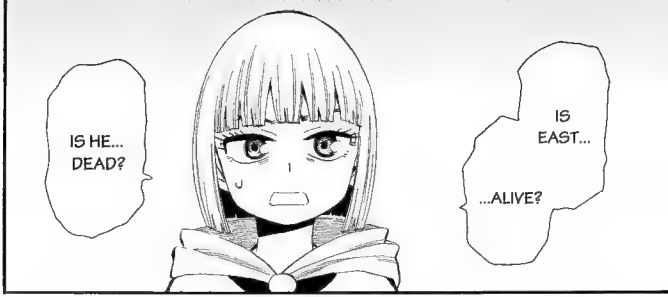
WHAT ABOUT IT, KOKO?
AN ENERGY SOURCE FOR BIOLOGICAL ACTIVITY.


...ARE DIFFERENT FROM EACH OTHER?


...THE LIVES OF THE PEOPLE YOU KILLED...
...AND THE LIVES OF THE PEOPLE WHO DIED IN THE SPIRIT FURNACE EXPLOSION...

...HOW IS IT THAT EAST'S LIFE...

OF COURSE, THAT'S BASED ON MY SUBJECTIVE STANDARDS.
THEIR LIVES ARE THE SAME.
BUT EAST'S EXISTENCE HAS MORE VALUE THAN THE OTHERS.
I...
BUT
...!!
DON'T YOU AGREE?
KOKO-CHAN...
...
LET'S GO.
THE SHIP'S LEAVING.
EAST IS BETTER NOW.
WHAT'S WRONG, KOKO?
...


IS HE... DEAD?
IS EAST...
...ALIVE?

LOOK.
HE'S RIGHT HERE.
HE'S ALIVE.

TELL ME!
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE ALIVE?!
HE CAN'T BAKE BREAD!
WE CAN'T TOUCH HIM!
BUT HE'S A SPIRIT, RIGHT?!

WHAT ABOUT...
YEAH, BUT...
...DON'T YOU EVEN CARE?!
YOU NEVER WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO TALK TO HIM AGAIN.
DON'T SHOUT.
RING
ARE YOU SAYING YOU'D RATHER EAST HAVE DIED FROM HIS ILL-NESS?

CARE?
ABOUT WHAT?
KOKO...
SHMM
I, KOKO, CARVE MY SPIRIT INTO THIS SPIRIT CIRCLE!!
I POSSESS THEE THROUGH UNIFICA-TION!!
GRAB
!!
?!
MERGING SPIRITS?!
IF YOU DO THAT--!!

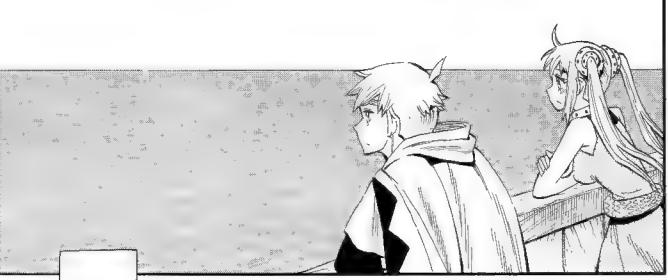
WHAT?!
HAA
DASH
I'M TAKING THIS!!
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE THIS!!
...THE MAN WHO BLEW UP THE SPIRIT FURNACES, IS RIGHT HERE!!
HEY!!
FOR-TUNA...

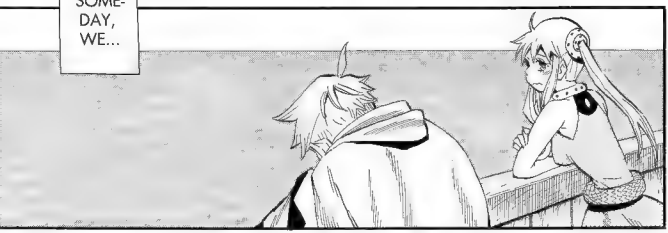
KOKO?!
EAST, COME WITH ME!!
RUNE, I'M SORRY!!
KOKO-CHAN?!
HE BLEW UP THE FURNACE.
YOU MEAN THAT EXPLOSION?
DASH!!
FORTUNA?
WHAT?
FORTUNA, YOU SHOULDN'T STUDY SPIRITS!!
HUH?
WHAT?
LET'S RUN FOR IT, RUNE!!
THE MAN WHO BLEW UP THE NORTHERN INDUSTRIAL TOWN IS HERE!!
GUARDS!!
FOR-TUNA ...!!
EAST ...!!

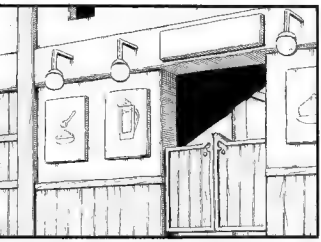
RUNE, DO IT!!
WHAT? BUT...
DO IT!!
YOU'RE FORTUNA-SAN?
COULD YOU COME WITH US?
!!
HI-YAH!!
WHOOSH
FWOOM
?!

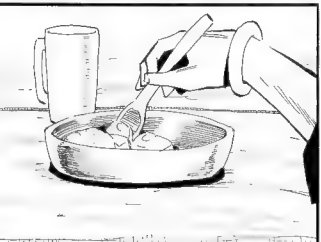
BACK...
GOTTA GET BACK.
MY BODY?!
WHA...
HUH?
THEY DON'T RECOGNIZE MY FACE.
AFTER TAKING A DETOUR, WE'LL OPENLY BOARD THE SHIP.
WHAT?!
HUH? JUST NOW...
WHAT ARE WE DOING?

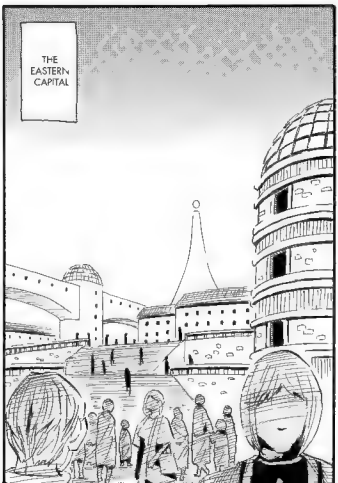
..WENT OUR SEPARATE WAYS.
AND SO, THE FOUR OF US. .




SOME-
DAY,
WE...






THE
EASTERN
CAPITAL

DID YOU HEAR?
THE SPIRIT FURNACE AT THE SOUTHERN MOUNTAIN TOWN EXPLODED.
AGAIN?
THERE WAS A SIMILAR INCIDENT ACROSS THE SEA AT THE NORTHERN INDUSTRIAL TOWN THE OTHER DAY.

THAT MONSTER FORTUNA APPEARED.
...
HE'S A HUGE DUDE WITH TATTOOS ON HIS FACE, RIGHT?
SO SCARY.
WHAT?
I THOUGHT SHE WAS A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN.
HM?

THE WANTED POSTERS THE GUARDS HANDED OUT SHOWED A MAN WITH A NASTY LOOK IN HIS EYES.
I HEARD SHE'S AN OLD WOMAN, OVER A HUNDRED YEARS OLD.
WHAT?
NONE OF US AGREE.
THANKS FOR THE FOOD.
SURE THING.

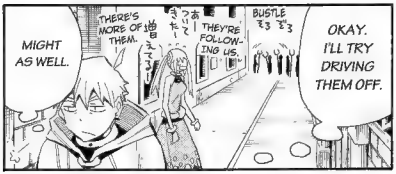
IT'S PROBABLY FORTUNA.
SHE'S RIGHT.
BUT LATELY THEY'RE BEGINNING TO DOUBT IT.
RUMOR SAYS SOMEONE'S BEEN SPREADING ALL KINDS OF DESCRIPTIONS AROUND TO MANIPULATE THE GUARDS' INFORMATION.
SOMEONE FROM FORTUNA'S TOWN HELPED COME UP WITH A SKETCH.
REALLY?

DURING OUR STAY HERE.
WE SPREAD WEIRD RUMORS AND VISITED THE LIBRARY...
JUMP
MASTER!!

AFTER PARTING WITH KOKO AND EAST, RUNE AND I CROSSED THE SEA TO THE EASTERN CAPITAL.
IS THIS THE END...?

ALSO, THEY WERE HANDING OUT PAPERS AND TALKING ABOUT WHETHER OR NOT THE DESCRIPTION OF FORTUNA WAS REAL OR SOMETHING.
THEY FINALLY FOUND OUT.
ハーはぁ
BE MORE SPECIFIC.
HOW'D IT GO?
THANKS FOR KEEPING WATCH.
THERE ARE LOTS OF GUARDS AROUND THE LIBRARY TODAY.

GLANCE
WE JUST MADE EYE CONTACT.
OH.
SHIT.
THEY WERE THERE WHEN I WENT TO THE GUARDHOUSE.
THOSE PEOPLE LOOKING OUR WAY AND TALKING ARE IN PLAIN CLOTHES, BUT THEY'RE GUARDS.


MIGHT AS WELL.
THERE'S MORE OF THEM.
THEY'RE FOLLOWING US.
BUSTLE
OKAY. I'LL TRY DRIVING THEM OFF.

RUN...
TURN
NO, I CAN'T. HMM.

I CAN THINK ABOUT THE FUTURE AFTER THAT.
IT'S A GOOD OPPORTUNITY...
...TO TEST OUT MY FRESHLY-CHARGED SECOND SPIRIT CIRCLE.

...AND ATTEMPTING TO MANIPULATE YOUR OWN DESCRIPTION, YOU'RE UNDER ARREST!!
FOR THE CRIMES OF DETONATING TWO SPIRIT FORGES...
SPIRIT SCHOLAR FORTUNA!!
ZZSSHHH
COME QUIETLY!!
THERE'S A CLIFF BEHIND YOU!!
SHOOM
HOW DARE YOU RUN INTO A GRAVE-YARD!!
SHFF...

CRACKLE
ARREST ME?
GRUMBLE
ボコ

?!

あ
AAARGH
あ
EEK?!
AH...
AAAAAHHH?!
あ

CRACKLE
CRACKLE
CRACKLE
TRY ME.
CALL REINFORCE-MENTS!! GET MORE PEOPLE!!
AAAH!!
ARGH
WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?!
ああ
THE BONES!!
THE BONES!!
あ
あAAAAAAAAH

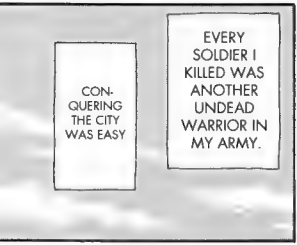
NOW I DON'T NEED TO SNEAK AROUND ANY-MORE.
あ
AAAH
あ
AAAH
MY INSTANT UNDEAD WARRIORS...
...ARE SUR-PRISINGLY STRONG.
うわあ
AAARGH

THEN I CAN READ ALL I WANT AT THE LIBRARY.
I KNOW!! MAYBE I'LL CONQUER THE EASTERN CAPITAL.

THESE WILL BE-COME POWER-FUL UNDEAD WARRIORS.
うわあ
AAARGH
あああ
AH, FRESH CORPSES.
THEY EVEN HAVE WEAPONS.

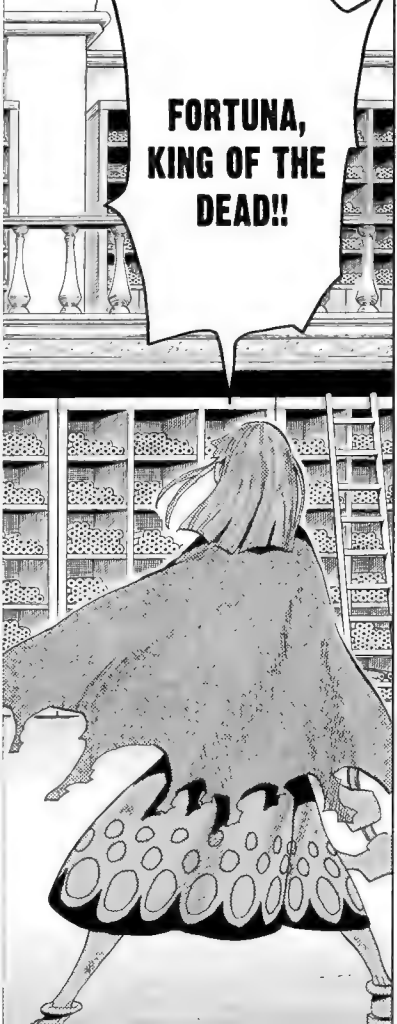
WHOOPS
I'VE MADE UP MY MIND!!
すた
STEP
GOOD, GOOD.

...BUT I DON'T THINK KOKO-CHAN WOULD LIKE THIS.
I...
...DON'T REALLY UNDERSTAND LIFE OR WHAT IT MEANS TO BE ALIVE...


CON-QUERING THE CITY WAS EASY
EVERY SOLDIER I KILLED WAS ANOTHER UNDEAD WARRIOR IN MY ARMY.

I'LL GIVE YOU SOME OF THE SOLDIERS' SPIRIT MATTER.
IT WILL MAKE YOU STRONGER.
ANYWAY, COME HERE, RUNE.
DID YOU SAY SOME-THING?
?

I HAVE NO IDEA HOW LONG I SPENT THERE.
.. AND LIVED A CAREFREE LIFE.
I ESTAB-LISHED MY HEAD-QUARTERS IN THE LIBRARY...


FORTUNA, KING OF THE DEAD!!

UNTIL ONE DAY...
CRASH
THERE YOU ARE!!
RATTLE RATTLE

WHEN *SHE* CALLED ME THAT...
...I REALIZED FOR THE FIRST TIME...

YOU'VE GROWN.
...THAT YEARS HAD PASSED.
AND YOU'VE GROWN OLD.

スピリットサークル
魂環

スピリットサークル
第5巻／完

〈6巻へつづく〉

作画スタッフ
　蝶田じゅえる
　臼井仁志
　相模 映

タイトルロゴ＆カバーデザイン
萩原栄一(bigbody)

担当編集
　須見武広

※この作品はフィクションです。

少年画報社

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電子書籍版

スピリットサークル

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水上悟志

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